YOUNG MEN'S

MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATIONS

MANUAL

FOR

JUNIOR CLASSES

1904-1905

SUBJECT

THE ANCIENT PROPHETS.

(CONTINUED.)

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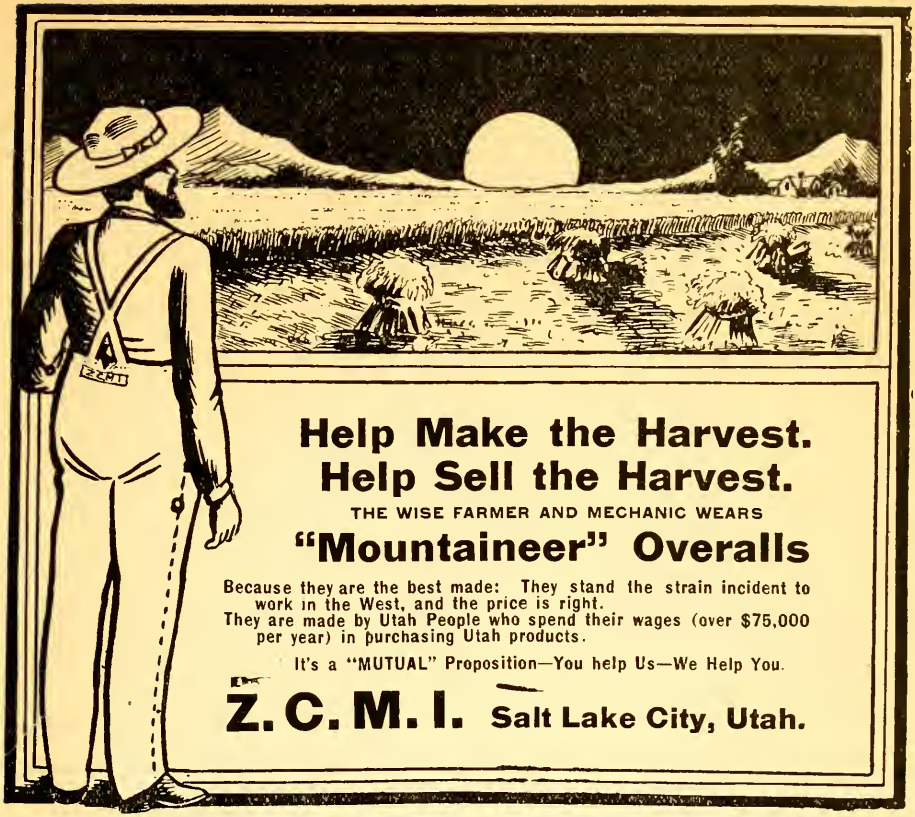

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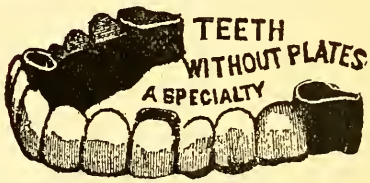

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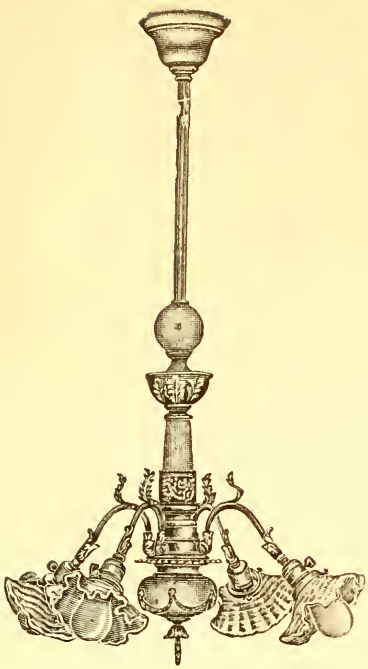

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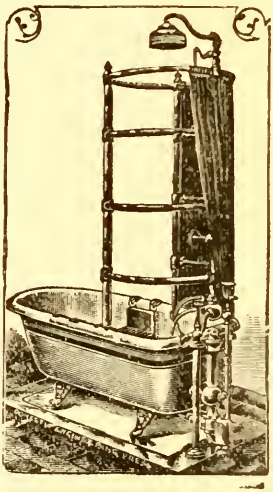

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PREFATORY NOTES.

This Manual is a continuation of last year's, and the general arrangement is the same. There are twenty lessons in all, twelve from the Old Testament and eight from the Book of Mormon. The notes and questions are gathered in a body and put at the end of the lessons.

In addition to giving the principal facts in the lives of the men discussed here, we have attempted to maintain a continuous thread of historical narrative in the Jewish and Nephite nations respectively. In other words, we have made a background for the characters from the general conditions prevailing at the time they lived. But these historical materials have been crowded into such a small compass that we fear the young men may experience, in a few instances, a little difficulty in getting a clear understanding of some of these lessons. This however, was altogether unavoidable, and the trouble will be easily overcome by thorough preparation on the part of the teacher.

Since the last eight lessons are devoted to characters taken from the Book of Mormon, and since the greater part of this ancient record will be pretty well covered in the study of this part of the Manual, it may not be out of place to call attention to a point which should be kept in mind as the lessons are considered. In the past it has sometimes been the case that our young people have entertained more or less extravagant notions concerning Nephite civilization, colonization, and extent of empire. Such ideas have arisen partly from the fact that the language in which this divine record comes to us is composed of words which in some instances bear larger connotations for us in our highly complex state of society than they would have when applied to the conditions of life that prevailed among the ancient inhabitants of America. An example of this is found in the word "king," which calls up in our minds the accompanying ideas of great wealth, power,

grandeur, and dignity, but which in the various stages of Nephite life and especially in the earlier history of these people. had no such significance. Great care should therefore be taken that our young men do not form higher conceptions of these things than the facts recorded in the book will warrant.

In speaking thus, we would not be understood as wishing to detract from the merits or the authority of these ancient scriptures, nor, least of all, as attempting to lower the estimate in which this record is held by the Latter-day Saints. The Book of Mormon comes to us direct from God. It was revealed to the prophet Joseph, and translated by immediate inspiration. It contains, moreover, great and sublime revelations of the truth, and we cannot over-estimate its importance as a divine revelation. It is not therefore to these phases of the Book of Mormon that we refer, but only to the historical facts, such as the general characteristics of the people, their modes of living, their number, the extent of territory they covered, and the like. It is necessary that we should bring to bear upon these facts a method of interpretation that is perfectly rational. For it can do no good, either to the Book of Mormon or to the people who place such a value upon this ancient record, to magnify the facts recorded upon its pages beyond their proper proportions.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES:

ANCIENT PROPHETS

(Continued.)

LESSON 1.

ELIJAH.

I. Division of the Kingdom.

The kingdom of Israel reached its zenith during the reign of Solomon. It had been won by the sword and consolidated by the statesmanship of David. But evil days followed the intemperate reign of Solomon. The great kingdom fell asunder; the ten tribes separated and formed the kingdom of Israel. They revolted against the tyranny of Rheoboam and accepted the leadership of Jeroboam, a strong and enterprising man who had been banished on account of his too great ambition. With the full knowledge that Solomon had been rejected by the Lord for introducing the worship of idols, Jeroboam nevertheless established idolatry at Dan and Bethel, and selected the lowest of the people as his priests. Thenceforth, idolatry became a part of the national religion of Israel. The tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained faithful to the house of David and were loyal to Rheoboam and his successors. They formed the kingdom of Judah.

Five years had not elapsed until the king of Egypt invaded Judah with an immense army, and Jerusalem was saved only by submitting to the most humiliating conditions. The Egyptians exacted as tribute the vast wealth that was stored in the temple.

After this the king of Judah became a better man. Of twenty rulers who governed Judah, all descendants of David, six are mentioned with great praise, others are commended

for their good works, but four were fearfully wicked, introducing idolatrous worship into the temple itself, and filling Jerusalem with blood. The kingdom of Israel was the center of interest for the first 140 years.

II. The Widow's Son Restored.

From Jeroboam to Ahab, a period of sixty years, there were six kings, three of whom were assassinated. Ahab married Jezebel, a daughter of the Tyrian king. She was one of the wickedest women in all history. The whole kingdom, largely under her influence tended rapidly towards idolatry. When apostasy had spread over almost the entire kingdom of Israel, God sent a prophet such as had not appeared since the days of Samuel.

Almost nothing is known of the early history of this prophet. The Bible simply speaks of him as "Elijah the Tishbite." He evidently was a man accustomed to a wild and solitary life. His first appearance was marked and extraordinary. Without warning, he stands in the presence of Ahab, and in a few strong words, declares what shall overtake the kingdom. He said, "As Jehovah, the God of Israel liveth, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." Then he mysteriously disappeared from the royal presence, and no one knew where he had gone. Men were immediately sent in all directions to search for this bold intruder. Elijah hid himself in the clefts of the rocks in the deep valley near Samaria, "and the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the brook." It was now the rainy season, yet no rain fell, though sixty inches was the usual quantity in the course of a year. The land, long parched by the summer heat, became like dust and ashes. The trees withered, and the mountains presented a dreary appearance, and at last the sheltered brook, from which the faithful prophet drank, failed. Then came the word of the Lord directing him to go to the city of Zarephath, a land where the worship of Baal was the only religion. As he approached the city, he saw a woman gathering

sticks in order to cook what she supposed would be her last meal.

To this woman, Elijah thus spoke: "Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel that I may drink, and bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand."

And she said, "As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruse: and behold, I am gathering two sticks that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die."

And Elijah said to her, "Fear not, go and do as thou hast said, but make thereof a little cake first and bring it unto me, and after, make for thee and for thy son. For thus sayeth the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth."

She was obedient. For many days these three were fed, "and the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail."

Soon after, the woman's son fell sick and died. Then the widow pleaded with Elijah and said, "What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come to me to call my sin to remembrance and to slay my son?"

And he said unto her, "Give me thy son." And he took him into his own room and prayed unto the Lord and said, "O Lord, my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? I pray thee let this child's soul come into him again." The Lord heard the prayer of Elijah, and the child was revived. Elijah took the child to its grateful mother, who exclaimed, "I know thee, thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is true."

III. Baal's Prophets Slain.

The famine continued until the whole kingdom was reduced to despair. Wells dried up, cisterns and reservoirs were exhausted. In this extremity, the king himself set out from his palace in search of vegetation and water. He went in one direction, and his prime minister, Obediah, in another. In this

hopeless search for grass and water, Obediah encountered Elijah, the prophet, who before this could not be found by the most diligent searching. Obediah would not consent to leave Elijah until he had promised to meet the king; for Ahab reasoned that if Elijah had the power to stay the rains, he had power also to bring them. When they met, Ahab addressed the prophet thus:

"Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" And Elijah replied, "I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and thou hast followed Baal." This lofty and fearless reply shows Elijah's splendid courage. Then he commanded Ahab to gather his people at Mt. Carmel. Soon, all the people and the prophets of Baalim were there assembled. Then the great prophet, Elijah, stood up before the vast multitude and said, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him. If Baal, then follow him." But no answer was given. Then Elijah explained to the people that he was the only prophet of the Lord, but that Baal had many prophets.

Baal was an idol, a false god, and Elijah knew that it was useless to pray to or worship him. So he proposed a test by which the people could be shown that an idol could not answer the appeals of his prophets. Two bullocks were brought for sacrifices, and the prophets of Baal were given their choice. They arranged the altar, prepared the wood, and placed the offering upon it. The test lay in their power to bring down fire from heaven, to light the altar. When all was prepared these prophets called on the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, "O Baal, hear us." But there was no answer. Then they leaped upon the altar and cried aloud and cut themselves with lances. Still no answer came. Then great excitement prevailed among them, but Elijah was calm. With the most provoking irony, he ridiculed their vain efforts. "Cry with a loud voice," he said, "for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or peradventure, he sleepeth, and must be awakened."

The time of the evening sacrifice came, and Elijah said to the people, "Come near unto me." With his own hands he

took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, and thus constructed a rude altar. "He put the wood in order, cut the bullock in pieces and laid him on the wood and said, Fill four barrels with water and pour it on the sacrifice and on the wood. And he said, do it a second time, and they did it the second time. And he said do it the third time and they did." Thus for three times, the altar and all that was upon it was saturated with water. When all was ready, he said, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, hear me, that these people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their hearts back again." * * "Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, The Lord is God, the Lord is God." Then the people at the command of Elijah, slew all of the prophets of Baal. Thus, this lone prophet had asserted the majesty, and proved the power of Jehovah.

LESSON II.

ELIJAH. (Continued.)

IV. Elijah in the Wilderness.

After this great triumph over idolatry the prophet prayed for rain, and a small cloud like a man's hand rose over the sea. It increased and spread rapidly and soon the parched earth was drenched. When the news reached Jezebel that the God whom she worshiped had been exposed, and the prophets who served him had been destroyed, she declared with an oath that Elijah should be slain before twenty-four hours. Thus threatened with death, the venerable prophet fled in haste to the wilderness, that wilderness where many years before, the children of Israel had wandered. There, weary and alone, he sat under a juniper tree. Fatigued and disappointed, he pleaded with the Lord to permit him to die. In his despair, he said, "Now, O, Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers." Enveloped with gloom and despondency, as a result of his unspeakable weariness, he fell asleep. An angel came with food and water, and awakened the prophet, saying, "Arise and eat." He ate and slept again. The second time the angel brought him food, which he ate. Then for forty days and nights, he journeyed until he reached the solitude of Sinai and Horeb. There he found shelter in a cave, and while he remained among the hoary rocks in the unbroken solitude of Horeb, the Lord appeared to him, but His advent was preceded by a mighty manifestation of power. The rocks were rent by a terrible wind, the earth shook with convulsions, and consuming fire flashed from the mountain. This awful demonstration was followed by a "still small voice," which said, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" And he said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy

prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." The Lord directed him to return to Damascus and to anoint Jehu king over Israel. On his journey, he cast his mantle upon Elisha, who became ever after, his constant companion.

V. The Curse of Ahab.

The weak king, Ahab, under the pernicious influence of his wicked and unscrupulous wife, Jezebel, had the innocent Naboth stoned to death in order to obtain a vineyard which he coveted. In this case, greed led not only to fraud and robbery, but resulted in murder and a mockery of justice. This notorious conduct reached the ears of Elijah, and when Ahab and his gardeners went to take possession of Naboth's vineyard, the intrepid prophet was there, and without a word of warning, he said, "Thus sayeth the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine." The guilty and conscience-smitten king said, "Hast thou found me, oh, mine enemy?" Then came the quick and terrible response, "I have found thee because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord. He will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. The dogs shall eat Jezebel, thy wife, by the walls of Jezreel. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city, the dogs shall eat, and him that dieth in the field, shall the fowls of the air eat."

This dreadful punishment was literally fulfilled. Ahab was wounded mortally in battle, and the dogs licked his blood from the floor of his chariot. His seventy sons were slain and never buried. Jezebel was thrown from an upper window in the wall surrounding the city of Jezreel, and the dogs devoured her body. This was the most awful doom that ever overtook any house recorded in history.

VI. The Fate of Ahaziah.

Ahaziah, the son and successor of Ahab, received a serious injury by falling through the lattice of his upper chamber. He

sent at once to the priests of Baal to inquire whether he should die or not. Elijah, at the command of the Lord, intercepted these messengers and said to them, "Is there no God in Israel, that ye sendeth to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Now therefore say ye unto the king, Thou shalt not come down from thy bed, but shalt surely die." And Elijah disappeared. By the description given of this man, Ahaziah concluded at once that it was the Prophet Elijah. He dispatched a band of fifty chosen men to arrest the prophet, who had, by this time, retired to the top of the mountain. The captain, at the head of fifty men, approached Elijah and said, "Thou man of God, the king hath said come down quickly." The prophet answered, "If I be the man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume thee and thy fifty." Fire came down and consumed them. Again the king sent another band of fifty and they met with the same fate. A third captain with his fifty was sent. This time, as the captain approached the prophet, he fell upon his knees and said, "O thou man of God, I pray thee that my life and the life of these fifty be precious in thy sight." Then, at the command of an angel, Elijah went down with the soldiers to the king. Again Elijah declared that the king should not live. Shortly after, Ahaziah died and Jehoram reigned in his stead.

VII. Elijah Translated.

Elijah seemed to know that the day of his departure was at hand. So leaving Gilgal, in company with his beloved companion, he proceeded toward Bethel. From here they went to Jericho, and from Jericho to Jordan. As they approached each of these cities, Elijah besought Elisha to leave him alone, but Elisha, who both loved and revered his master, refused to part from him. When they reached the Jordan, its waters happened to be swollen so they could not pass over. But the sacred narrative tells us that Elijah wrapped his mantle together and smote the waters so that they divided and the two passed over on dry ground.

As a token of love and remembrance, Elijah promised to give his faithful companion whatever he might ask. Elisha

simply asked for a double portion of his master's spirit, which Elijah granted in case Elisha should see him when he was taken away, "and it came to pass, as they went on, and talked, that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."

This ended the ministrations of Elijah among the idolatrous people of that generation. But upon a subsequent occasion, he visited men upon the earth. On the third day of April, 1836, he appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland temple. It is described as follows: "And after this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us, for Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death stood before us, and said,—Behold the time has fully come which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi, testifying that he (Elijah) should be sent before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse.

"Therefore the keys of this dispensation are committed unto your hands, and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at thy doors."

See D. & C. Sec. 110 Verses 13-16.

LESSON III.

ELISHA.

I. He is Called to the Ministry.

After Elijah had endured the loneliness of Horeb, he enjoyed ever after the companionship of his faithful friend and successor, Elisha. You will remember that as Elijah journeyed from the wilderness toward Damascus, he cast his mantle upon Elisha, who was ploughing in the field. Elisha understood that this was a call to labor in the ministry as a prophet; so he left everything and followed the venerable Elijah. He did not question this call, but simply asked permission to bid farewell to his parents. He said, "Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and mother; then I will follow thee." This request was granted. One last parting with those he loved, and he was henceforth the prophet's faithful attendant, rendering him every personal service, and at the same time preparing himself to take Elijah s place when the Lord should call that prophet hence.

Elisha, though a young man at the time of his call, was the owner and manager of an ample estate, situated about three miles south of Bethshea in the sunken bed of the Jordan River, just below the lake of Galilee. He was surrounded with the comforts of an easy competence and belonged to the nobility of his time. In many respects he was quite the opposite of the stern and courageous Elijah. In disposition he was more gentle; in manners, more refined; and withal, more tender and sympathetic. But both of these men were possessed of fidelity and courage in a heroic degree. The times and conditions required these stern qualities. Israel had declined in morals and religion. Crime was common, and apostasy almost universal.

II. Elisha Begins Alone.

For more than sixty years he served as a prophet. After witnessing on the east of Jordan, the glorious translation of his

great teacher, he turned his face again toward Jericho. He was now clothed with a double portion of the spirit and power of a prophet. When he reached the Jordan he folded the sacred mantle used by Elijah, and smiting the waters with it, parted them hither and thither. When he related to his friends how Elijah had been taken to heaven, they determined, much against Elisha's will, to send out a searching party, arguing that perhaps Elijah had been carried to some lonely mountain and left there to perish. Their search was in vain, however, for the great prophet had been taken to heaven without tasting death. Space will not permit us to relate all of the wonderful things Elisha did, but we shall refer to some of them.

III. Heals the Waters.

The waters at Jericho were bitter, and the land barren. Soon after the prophet returned to this place, a deputation of citizens waited upon him and explained the results of this bad water. In answer he said, "Bring me a new cruse and put salt therein. And they brought it to him. Then he went forth unto the spring of the waters and cast the salt in and said, Thus sayeth the Lord, I have healed these waters. There shall not be from thence any more dearth or barren land." The waters were made ever after sweet and wholesome. And the land smiled with plenty.

One of the prophet's friends died in debt, leaving a widow and two sons. The laws concerning debts at that time were very severe. Soon after the man's death, his creditors threatened to seize the widow's sons and sell them as slaves. The grief stricken woman, in her distress went to the prophet with her troubles. After listening sympathetically to her, the good prophet said, "What shall I do for thee? Tell me what hast thou in the house. And she said, I have not anything in the house save a pot of oil." Then he directed her to borrow vessels from her neighbors and to "borrow not a few," and when everything was ready, to go into her house, shut the door, and fill all these vessels with oil. She did as directed. All the vessels were miraculously filled and she came and told the man of

God and he said, "Go and sell the oil and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children on the rest." Thus her sons were saved and they had plenty until the famine passed.

IV. Elisha Raises the Widow's Son.

This miracle was followed by one no less remarkable. In the city of Shunem there dwelt a wealthy woman. Elisha, in his missionary pilgrimages, frequently passed by her house. On one occasion she invited the prophet to eat with them, which he did; and this was the beginning of a strong and lasting friendship. The hospitable woman soon perceived that the prophet was indeed a man of God, and with that quick and charitable instinct of her sex, she suggested to her husband that they build a little chamber on the wall, furnish it, and make it a comfortable resting place for the prophet. The husband received kindly the suggestion and ever thereafter the weary prophet and his companions found a sweet welcome.

It is needless to say that the prophet appreciated this thoughtful expression of kindness toward him. His gratitude no doubt made them happy, but they were paid many times for their kindness toward the servant of the Lord. This good woman had no children, but through the prayer of the prophet she was given a son. When the child was grown he went with his father's reapers into the field, but while there he was taken with a severe headache. He was carried home and, at noon he died in his mother's arms. The grief stricken mother went in haste for the prophet Elisha. When he saw her coming, he knew something was wrong by the speed with which she rode. So he sent his servant to run and meet her and find what the trouble was. When he asked her if all was well, she simply answered, "All is well," but went directly to the prophet, knelt down and caught him by the feet and Gehazi the servant was about to thrust her away, but the prophet told him not to because her soul was troubled. Soon Elisha discovered that her boy was dead, so he said to Gehazi, "Make ready, take thy staff in thy hand and go to the child. Go in haste and lay my staff upon the face of the child." But the woman would not return

without the prophet. Consequently, Elisha accompanied her, and through fervent prayer, restored the child to life. When the prophet sent for her to come and take up her son, "she fell at the prophet's feet and bowed herself to the ground and took up her son and went out." This is but one example of the prophet's kindness.

Leaving Shunem, he went to Gilgal. At that time there was great scarcity of food, and at Elisha's request one of the men prepared some pottage to eat. Among other herbs, he had gathered a poisonous vine and after it was served and some of it had been eaten, the men discovered that it was a deadly poison, and they exclaimed, "O thou man of God, there is death in thy pot," and Elisha said, "Bring me the meal." And he cast it into the pot." Then they ate freely without harm.

LESSON IV.

ELISHA (Continued.)

V. Naaman's Leprosy.

Naaman was a distinguished captain of the Syrians, a man of great valor, of noble appearance and withal a most commanding personality, who had delivered his people from the assaults of the Assyrians. He was the Wellington of his age. But he was afflicted with that dreadful and incurable disease, leprosy. The war-like Syrians frequently made attacks upon the people of Israel and captured all they could and sold them as slaves. Among the prisoners captured in one of their forays was a young Hebrew girl who had been brought as a slave to wait on Naaman's wife. Struck by the misery of her master, she said to her mistress, "Would to God my master were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would cure him of his leprosy." Her words were carried to the king, Benhadad, who prevailed on his chief captain Naaman to go at once and see if he could be healed. Benhadad, king of Syria, wrote a letter to Joram, king of Israel, asking Joram to aid in the matter, and, at the same time sending rich presents to the prophet to secure his aid. The gold and silver alone amounted to about $60,000 in our money. Thus armed, Naaman set out for Samaria in his chariot accompanied by a body guard of cavalry and delivered his letter to the king of Israel. Joram could not understand the letter and was greatly distressed over the matter for he supposed it was a mere pretext for another attack upon him by the Syrians. Elisha, hearing of the king's distress, asked him to send Naaman to him "that he might know that there was a prophet in Israel." Forthwith Naaman set off with his escort to Elisha's home. The prophet, a strict Jew, could not approach a leper, so he sent a message to his royal visitor saying, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." The simplicity of this prescription was too much for the proud Naaman, accustomed to receiving the deference paid to Oriental princes. Shocked and enraged, he drove away exclaiming,

VI. Naaman Healed.

"Behold, I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

"Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

"And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?

"Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

"And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.

"But he said, As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none." And he urged him to take it; but he refused.

On another occasion the Syrian army came up against Israel and Elisha was able to tell the king of Israel just where to station his army to prevent the Syrians from surprising them. They declared that Elisha told the Israelites the very words spoken in the secret councils of the Syrians. A great host was sent to capture the prophet and bring him before the Syrian king. They surrounded, by night, the city where the prophet stayed. Elisha's servant was very much afraid when he saw the army, but Elisha was perfectly calm. When the soldiers came to arrest him he said to the Lord, "Smite this people I pray thee with blindness." And He smote them with blindness according to the words of Elisha. While they were thus afflicted, Elisha led them into Samaria, where they could easily have been captured. There surrounded by the enemy, their eyes were opened. The king of Israel asked if he might not slay them, but he forbade them to do that and directed that they

be feasted and then be permitted to return in safety to their army. "Thus humiliated and beaten with kindness the bands of Syria came no more unto the land of Israel."

VI. His Death.

For sixty years the hoary-headed prophet had testified among the people. He had wrought miracles and taught in their streets but his efforts availed nothing, the people's hearts seemed fixed on evil. His life was fast drawing to a close. Finally he fell sick and the word ran through the city that he was about to die.

All classes of people esteemed the venerable prophet, so blameless in charcter, so sympathetic and tender toward the sorrowful, and at the same time so strong and staunch in defense of right. The king, to testify his reverence for the prophet hero, went to his bed-side and remained there until the prophet passed away. "He, not the forces of cavalry and footmen," sobbed the king, "was the true bulwark of the kingdom had he been duly heeded."

LESSON V.

ISAIAH.

I. Jotham and Ahaz.

Two hundred years had elapsed since the death of Solomon. During that time nine kings and one queen had sat upon the throne of Judah. They all belonged to the house of David and with one or two exceptions were faithful and virtuous. It was among the people of Judah that Isaiah ministered. He made his public appearance as a prophet in the last year of Uzziah's reign, 757 B. C. Uzziah was succeeded by Jotham. The sixteen years that Jotham reigned were marked by great financial prosperity, trade flourished, peace and quiet prevailed in Judah, no foreign foes oppressed from without, no political agitations disturbed within, and the people increased in wealth. During this time Isaiah was not silent. He was an earnest preacher, striving to reform the morals of the leaders and to correct the errors of the nation, contending always for the removal of whatever remained of idolatry. While the prophet's labors were less prominent during Jotham's time, they were none the less earnest.

In 740 B. C. Jotham was succeeded by the boy-king Ahaz, who likewise ruled sixteen years. This youthful and irreligious king experienced much trouble. The first year of his reign was disturbed by an invasion. The combined forces of Israel and Syria essayed to conquer Judah. Hoping to humiliate his enemies and to deliver his people from this invasion he formed an alliance with the king of Assyria. This conduct called forth the most earnest and eloquent appeal from the great statesman and prophet Isaiah. He sought by all the powers of his soul to prevent this alliance. In vain he exhorted them to trust in God, who alone was their King; declaring to them that Assyria would "shave" them of their earthly treasures.

But the popular excitement was too great for the people to listen to this wise counsel; it resulted in paying a heavy gift to the Assyrians.

II. The Assyrians Destroyed.

Hezekiah, the son and successor of Ahaz, began reigning when he was 25 years old and continued for 29 years. He was a righteous prince who followed faithfully in the footsteps of David.

An effort was made during his reign to free the country from the yoke of Assyria. They formed an alliance with Egypt and Ethiopia with this end in view. Sargon, who was king of Assyria, was not on friendly terms with either of these nations, therefore their aid could easily be obtained. Isaiah opposed this movement; again and again with marked earnestness and splendid eloquence, he warned his fellow citizens against this alliance, showing the treachery of the Pharoahs and pointing out that disaster would follow this policy. In 713 B. C. Sennacherib, the powerful king of Assyria with a vast army marched against Judah. In mortal fear Hezekiah made humble submission and consented to pay a heavy tribute of gold and silver. In order to meet this payment the richly ornamented pillars and doors of the temple were stripped of their gold, and 200,-180 people were taken captive, together with numerous horses, mules, asses, camels, oxen, and sheep.

The Jews finally ceased to pay the heavy annual tribute, but before long the Assyrian army approached Jerusalem and it appeared as if final ruin were to overtake the state. All the surrounding cities were taken and Hezekiah was shut up in Jerusalem like a caged bird.

Now the conquering king sent an embassy to dictate terms to Hezekiah, and at the same time they reproached the living God. In this hour of trouble the righteous king sent messengers to Isaiah pleading with him to intercede with the Lord in their behalf.

In answer Isaiah said to them, "Thus shall ye say to your master, thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the word thou hast heard with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold I will send a blast upon him and he shall hear a rumor, and he shall return to his own land."

"And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord

went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and eighty-five thousand." So Sennacherib returned in disgrace to Nineveh. He was soon after assassinated by his own son. This was the most signal manifestation of God's power toward his people since the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. It also greatly strengthened the hand of Isaiah and at the same time weakened and discouraged his opponents.

III. Hezekiah's Life Lengthened Fifteen Years.

The king was taken very sick, and when the disease had reached its crisis the prophet visited him at the palace and said:

"Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order for thou shalt die and not live. Then he turned his face to the wall and prayed unto the Lord saying, I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight," and then he wept bitterly. Isaiah had scarcely left the royal residence when the Lord directed him to return and say to the king, "I have heard thy prayers, I have seen thy tears: behold I will heal thee, and I will add to thy days fifteen years." In three days he was again ministering in the temple.

Hezekiah was a righteous man but did some unwise things. Baladan, the unscrupulous king of Babylon, resolved to win some of the provinces controlled by Assyria, sent an embassy to Jerusalem to find out the real conditions. The messengers took with them presents to the king and also letters of sympathy and congratulations. The unsuspecting king, flattered by this deceitful courtesy was thrown off his guard. He took the enemy into his confidence and showed them his rich treasures of gold, silver and other precious things. Isaiah knew that this would only excite the greed of Babylon and result in the bitterest experience for Judah. Then he declared to Hezekiah that the day would come when all these treasures should be carried to Babylon, also all of the king's sons. This good king died at the end of the fifteen years and was succeeded by his son, Manasseh. This is the last public act recorded of Isaiah, and the account of his death is not given.

IV. Isaiah's Character.

Isaiah is described as a preacher, historian, statesman, poet, and prophet. The solemn grandeur of his character is shown in his writings. He was a favorite of King Hezekiah and lived at the same time as the prophets Hosea, Amos and Jonah. He wrote the life of Uzziah and died during the reign of Manasseh.

He was a citizen of Jerusalem, living not far from the temple. From the brief account given of his private life we learn that he was married and had at least two sons. His wife is spoken of as a prophetess and the names of his sons have a peculiar religious significance. One writer says that the mind of Isaiah was one of the most sublime and variously-gifted instruments, which the Spirit of God ever use to pour forth its voice upon the world.

The style of Isaiah's writings is universally admired for its magnificence and sweetness. "In Isaiah we see prophetic authorship reaching its culminating point. Everything conspired to raise him to an elevation to which no other prophet, either before or after could attain. Among the other prophets, each of the more important ones is distinguished by some one particular excellence, and some one peculiar talent; in Isaiah all kinds of talent and all beauties of prophetic discourse meet together so as to mutually temper and qualify each other; it is not so much any single feature that distinguishes him as the symmetry and perfection of the whole. In the sentiments which he expresses, in the topics of his discourse, and in the manner of expression Isaiah uniformly reveals himself as the Kingly Prophet."

His words are quoted by the Savior and His apostles more frequently than the words of any other prophet.

V. Prophecies of Isaiah.

Among the prophecies of Isaiah which deserve to be particularly noted for their clearness and their remarkableness are those which relate to the captivity of Israel and Judah, and

those describing the ruin and desolation of Babylon, Tyre and other nations.

He spoke of Cyrus by name two hundred years before that ruler's birth. But without doubt the most remarkable of his prophecies are those relating to the Messiah, His divine character, His miracles, His rejection and suffering for sin; His death, burial, and victory over the grave, and lastly His final triumph and glory. More than 700 years before the Savior's birth this great poet-prophet tells in twelve short verses the life, mission, and death of the Master. Read the 53 chapter.

No less distinct and wonderful are His utterances relating to the great last dispensation. With marvelous clearness are the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the establishment of the church foretold. (Read chapter 29.) We are living witnesses of the fulfillment of many prophecies relating to the gathering of Israel and the establishment of Zion in the tops of the mountains.

LESSON VI.

DANIEL.

There is nothing in human character more truly noble than that integrity which fearlessly faces danger rather than compromise with sin. This admirable characteristic is strongly marked in the career of Daniel. He was born in the city of Jerusalem and belonged to the royal house of David. When he was not more than twelve years of age, he was taken captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar.

I. Daniel Chosen.

During the wicked reign of Zedekiah, king of Jerusalem, the Jews practiced idolatry and indulged in the most reckless impiety. As a result of this, corruption, poverty and wretchedness, reigned in the ancient house of Israel. From these conditions, emerged that princely prophet, Daniel, and his three friends, Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego.

Nebuchadnezzar, the ruling king of Babylon, directed his chief servant to select certain of the children of Israel, "in whom was no blemish, but well favored and skillful in all wisdom, and cunning knowledge, and understanding of the sciences, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans." Nothing could be better fitted to win the loyalty of the captive Jews than to select leaders from among their number and make them princes and rulers in the Babylonian kingdom. The requirements of those selected show that Daniel and his three Hebrew companions were distinguished not only for their physical beauty and courtly address, but were also distinguished for their intelligence and learning. Three years were to be devoted to the special training of these favored young men, and at the end of this time, they were to be made pages to the great king and stand in his royal presence. They were taken to the palace, put under the

care of the chief Eunuch, fed from the royal table, and skillfully instructed in the learning of the Chaldeans.

II. First Example of Daniel's Integrity.

The honorable and manly conduct of these young Jews soon won the confidence and favor of those over them. The Scriptures say that, "the prince of the Eunuchs loved Daniel tenderly."

The Jews were forbidden by the law of Moses to eat certain kinds of food, as well as food prepared in certain ways. For three years these young men were not only to be instructed in the learning of the Chaldeans, but were to be fed in a way judged best to promote their health and improve their physical appearance. They were given wine to drink and flesh to eat. Daniel saw that to partake of this food would be contrary to the teachings of the prophets of his people, and against the training of his early boyhood. "He therefore proposed, in his heart, that he would not defile himself with this portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank. Consequently, he kindly asked permission of the officer in charge to live upon a simple diet; to which the Eunuch replied, "I fear the lord, my king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink, for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? Then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king." Then Daniel replied, "Prove thy servants, I beseech thee ten days, and give us pulse to eat and water to drink, then will our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenances of the children that ate of the portion of the king's meat; and as thou seest, deal with thy servants." The test was made and at the end of ten days, "the countenances of these four young men appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat of the portion of the king's meat." As a result, Daniel and his companions lived for the remaining three years on a simple diet, and "God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom." At the end of their training, in common with all who had been thus selected and trained, these young Jews were examined

by the king, and there was found none like them. "In all matters of wisdom and understanding that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in his realm." This is a splendid example of plain living and high thinking.

III. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream.

The king had a dream which greatly troubled him, and he called together the wise men of his realm and demanded an interpretation of it. When they were assembled, they asked the king to relate his dream so that they might interpret it; but the king, in his trouble and anxiety, had forgotten it. This, however, strange to say, was not allowed as an excuse. He still demanded the interpretation of his dream, which he could not relate, and which was unknown to them. In a blind rage, this despot issued an edict that if the wise men failed to recall the whole dream to his royal memory and interpret it clearly, they should be cut to pieces and their very houses torn down. No argument could change this mad decree of the royal tyrant. Arioch, captain of the King's Guard, was sent forth to execute this pernicious verdict upon the unfortunate magi. Daniel and his companions were included among those doomed to death. Daniel and his faithful friends at once appealed to the Lord in mighty prayer concerning this secret, and as a result of their integrity and faith in God, the dream with its interpretation was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then these devout young men, filled with gratitude, blessed the name of the Lord forever, and exclaimed, "He revealeth the deep and secret things. He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth in him." Daniel was taken into the presence of the troubled king, and with courage and modest dignity, through the inspiration of God, he reproduced the dream and gave its full interpretation. This was a wonderful dream, and its interpretation was full of significance. You may read it in the second chapter of Daniel, from the 31st to 46th verses. Note carefully the 34th and 44th verses. The king was overcome with this revelation and fell upon his knees and worshiped

Daniel, who ascribed the honor to God, who had give him the interpretation. Daniel was given many presents, and was made ruler over the whole province of Babylon. Unwilling to leave his faithful companions in obscurity, he obtained a special promotion for them also.

LESSON VII.

DANIEL. (Continued).

IV. The Fiery Furnace.

But life in high places, in those days, was always uncertain and insecure. Nebuchadnezzar ordered a great golden idol to be erected in a wide plain near Babel, and demanded that all the population of his kingdom should bow down at a given signal and worship it; with the decree that whosoever did not obey should be cast into a burning fiery furnace. It was certain that men possessed of the intelligence and knowledge that Daniel and his friends possessed would not obey a decree which invaded the rights of conscience. Others might bow down to idols, but they would serve the God of their salvation. Though Daniel had saved from destruction the magicians, still they hated him with a malignant and jealous hatred because his faith in the living God had given him superior manhood, and won for him the place of ruler over them. Going before Nebuchadnezzar, these magicians recounted to the king that Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego had refused to worship the golden image which the king had set up, and had served their own God. Nothing was too terrible to satisfy the wrath of the king. He directed that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual; that these Hebrews be bound in their coats and hosen and their hats, and that they be cast into the burning fiery furnace. The most mighty men that were in his army were directed to lay hold of these innocent young men and cast them in the consuming flames. The men who threw them in were overpowered and consumed by the intense heat, but to the surprise of all, and especially to the horror of the king, they walked unhurt amid the fire, and at their side, stood a form which the king could only describe as "like the Son of God." This august sight humbled the

despot's pride, and approaching the furnace, he called to them to come forth, and they did so untouched and without even the smell of fire upon them. Then went forth the decree "that every people, nation, and tongue which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego shall be cut in pieces and their houses made a dung hill, because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort."

VI. The Hand-Writing on the Wall.

At a later time, Daniel was able to interpret another dream which none of the magicians nor their associates could interpret. This is the last instance narrated regarding Daniel in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. We are next introduced to him at the last night of the reign of Belshazzar on the evening of the fall of the empire of Babylon. Trusting in the strength of the great wall surrounding the city, the king held a royal feast. The sacred vessels of the Jewish temple were brought in, and with unequalled ostentation, and in defiance of Jehovah, they drank from these vessels in honor of heathen deities. But in the midst of this revelry, a sudden stop was put to all their mirth, and the conscience-stricken king was seized with a terror which caused his very knees to smite each other. The mysterious form of a man's hand was seen writing on the bared wall of the banquet chamber, words which no one present could interpret.

Once more Daniel was called in. He was then about eighty years of age, but with that grand fearlessness, so characteristic of that great man, he at once read the writing, which was, "Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin." (God has numbered thy kingdom and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.) Before the terror-stricken revelers could leave the hall, the Persian soldiers entered brandishing their naked and blood-stained swords. An awful slaughter followed in which the king himself was slain, and the great Babylonian empire came to an end; and Darius, the Mede, reigned. The fame of Daniel secured for him greater honor

under the new government than he had enjoyed under the old. One hundred and twenty princes governed the province, and over them were three dignitaries, of whom Daniel was the first.

VII. Daniel in the Lion's Den.

That a foreigner and a captive should occupy such a position of dignity and honor, naturally revived the jealousy of many of the great ones of the kingdom, and a conspiracy was formed against Daniel. These conspirators flattered king Darius into the notion of issuing a decree that no petition should be asked for thirty days from any god or man, except from the king, under the penalty of being thrown to the lions. But whether they should perish or not, was of small concern to men so devoutly faithful to Jehovah as Daniel and his companions. Opening his window toward Jerusalem, Daniel knelt and prayed three times a day, and gave thanks to his God. Spies instantly reported him to the king. The decree could not be set aside; still the weak king sought to evade it, and labored, we are told, "until the going down of the sun" to deliver his faithful servant, but he was compelled to consign Daniel, the victim of jealousy and treachery, to the barbarous punishment which his decree appointed. The faithful prophet was cast into the lion's den, but the same God who delivered the three from the fires of the furnace, shut the mouths of the lions, and Daniel was unharmed among the savage beasts.

After a sleepless night, the king, full of anxiety, returned to the den and cried aloud, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God whom thou servest able to deliver thee from the lions?" Daniel replied that God had sent his angel and had shut the lions' mouths that they hurt him not. Then the repentant king declared to all people, nations and languages that dwell in all the earth, "I, Darius, issue my decree that in the dominion of my kingdom, men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God and steadfast forever, and his kingdom hath that which shall not be destroyed; and his dominion shall be ever unto the end."

This is the last notice we have of the brave and princely Daniel, except that he died under the reign of Cyrus, the Persian.

LESSON VIII.

JEREMIAH.

I. Character and Disposition.

Jeremiah was the second of the great prophets, and is the most striking figure in the last age of the Kingdom of Judah. He lived to mourn over the ruined city of Jerusalem and to witness the captivity of her people.

His life was full of sadness, as is indicated in his name, which means "The Lord casts down." Jeremiah was the son of a priest and lived in a small village near Jerusalem called Anathoth.

In disposition he was modest and sensitive, inclined to retirement, and withal poorly fitted in temperament to meet the evils of his time. But all undue modesty and hesitation was lost when the call came to be a witness for the Master. The timidity and weakness of natural temperament were forgotten in his grand devotion to duty.

He began his work as a prophet during the reign of the noble king and reformer, Josiah.

The young king took a determined stand against all forms of idolatry and was very zealous in establishing the worship of Jehovah in Judah. By the 18th year of his reign he had torn down the altars, destroyed the graven images, and purged the land from idolatry. Large sums of money were now collected for the purpose of cleansing and repairing the temple. During this work in the temple a book of the "Law of the Lord by Moses" was discovered. It is generally agreed that this was the book of Deuteronomy. Josiah had the book read before the elect of his kingdom, with the result that the people renewed their covenants, and kept a most solemn passover, lasting a week.

II. Judah and Egypt.

The two great powers on the east and west, Babylon and Egypt, were in a mortal struggle for supremacy. This very naturally involved Judah in the trouble. All went well until Necho, King of Egypt, went against Babylon. The Egyptians had no intentions of disturbing Judah, and sent ambassadors to Josiah, assuring him of this and explaining their campaign. But the ambitious young king could not be persuaded by them nor by the prophet Jeremiah, that it would be disastrous for him to go against Egypt. Leading his army in person he engaged the Egyptians in battle on the field of Megiddo, where he met a most crushing defeat. During the battle the king was mortally wounded and died soon after reaching Jerusalem. His death was a national calamity. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for him. He was buried with royal honors, and his life and services were ever after solemnly commemorated by his people. Judah was now laid under tribute to Egypt; this continued for five years. Jehoiakim was king of Judah during the supremacy of Egypt and for nearly six years thereafter.

III. Judah Taken Captive.

In the year 605 B. C. the Egyptians met the Babylonians on the historic field Carchemish and were defeated and Babylon became the master of the world and Judah became her vassal. For a few years Judah paid tribute annually to Nebuchadnezzar. About this time the Babylonians sent an army against Egypt. Jehoiakim seized this opportunity to revolt and refused to pay tribute. This resulted in an expedition against Jerusalem. The city surrendered without offering resistance and the king and many of the nobility were wantonly massacred. The succeeding king reigned only three months, when Jerusalem was again assailed. Under oath of protection to the citizens and preservation of the city, the king and his family gave themselves into the hands of the Babylonians. But within a single year the treacherous Babylonians invaded Jerusalem and carried captive more than

10,000 of the representative citizens, including all of youth and the skilled workmen, together with whatever remained of value in the temple and city. Zedekiah was placed upon the throne by Nebuchadnezzar to rule the scattered fragments of the kingdom. He continued to rule until the overthrow of Judah and the complete destruction of Jerusalem.

IV. Destruction of Jerusalem.

During the last years of Zedekiah there were two political parties in Judah, those that counselled resistance to Babylon and those that advised submission. To the latter class belonged Jeremiah. The first mentioned party supposed that they could league with some of the small surrounding nations and throw off their allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar. But it was evident that Judah must remain in vassalage either to Egypt or to Babylon. Jeremiah wisely and persistently urged submission to Babylon, for he seemed to know that any other policy meant utter ruin. Finally Nebuchadnezzar lost faith in Zedekiah and resolved to destroy Jerusalem. In the meantime an embassy was sent from Edom, Moab, Tyre and Sidon to Jerusalem with the hope that Zedekiah would join with them in an effort to throw off the yoke of bondage.

The prophet foresaw the consequences of this plan and earnestly protested against it. To make his protest more impressive he procured a number of common ox yokes, and putting one on his own neck, he sent one to each of the embassy with the following message:

"Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel. I have made the earth and man and the beast on the face of the earth by my great power, and I give it to whom I see fit. And now I have given all these lands into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, to serve him. And all the nations shall serve him till the time of his own land comes; and then many nations and great kings shall make him their servant. And the nation and the people that will not serve him, and that does not give its neck to the yoke, that nation I will punish with sword, famine and pestilence, till I have consumed them by his hand."

V. Jerusalem Besieged.

This message was sent to Zedekiah with the further statement: "Bring your necks under the yoke of the King of Babylon, and serve him and ye shall live. Do not listen to the words of the prophets who say to you, Ye shall not serve the King of Babylon. They prophecy a lie to you." This brought upon Jeremiah the bitterest wrath of these false prophets. Although he was alone, he was still undaunted. Hananiah, one of these professed prophets, snatched the ox-yoke from the neck of Jeremiah and broke it saying, "Thus saith Jehovah, Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar from the necks of all nations within two years." To this Jeremiah replied that he had broken a wooden yoke only to prepare an iron one for the necks of the people. He also declared that Jehovah had not sent Hananiah and that he had led the people to trust in a lie for which he should die that very year.

In two months the lying prophet was dead. Zedekiah awe-struck with the death of his counsellor, was now disposed to act on the advice of Jeremiah. But things went from bad to worse in Jerusalem. The people were flattered into the foolish idea that they could maintain their independence, Consequently every preparation was made to defend the city against the mightiest monarch that ever reigned in the East before the time of Cyrus. The great army of Nebuchadnezzar marched against the doomed city. They pitched their tents on all sides of it and erected high towers near the walls from the top of which they could throw stones into the city and shoot arrows over the walls. They also employed huge battering-rams to batter down the walls. These rams, and the engineers who operated them, were protected by means of sheds from the stones and other missiles which were hurled at them from the walls and towers. So strongly was the city fortified that the inhabitants were able to stand a siege of eighteen months.

At the end of this time they were driven to desperation. They could resist arrows and stones and battering rams, but

they could not resist the work of ghastly famine and desolating pestilence. Finally the Chaldeans made a breach in the west wall, and at midnight overpowered the guards, rushed into the streets, tore down the temples, and reduced the city to a mass of ruins. Many of the inhabitants who had survived the strangling grasp of famine were slain in the streets. The few remaining were carried captive into Babylon. Zedekiah's sons and courtiers were executed before his face. His eyes were thrust out and he was taken bound to Babylon and made to work as a slave in a mill. Thus in the year 588 B. C. the dynasty of David was ended.

VI. Fate of Jeremiah.

During the siege, Jeremiah fell into the hands of the opposing faction and was beaten, and imprisoned in a dungeon. His enemies, not satisfied with this, afterwards cast him into a well in which the water had dried, but at the bottom of which there was deep mud and slime. From this pit of death and misery he was rescued by one of the guards and thereafter remained secreted in the royal palace until the city fell.

In view of his earnest efforts to prevent the rebellion and owing to his integrity and high character, the conquerors spared him. Nebuchadnezzar gave him his choice either to accompany him to Babylon with the promise of high favor at his court or to remain at home.

Although Jerusalem was destroyed, the hills and vales of his native land were left. The few surviving peasants cultivated the neglected vineyards. Among this remnant, the dispondent prophet preferred to spend his remaining days. He made the city Mezpeh his home. From here he was carried into Egypt, and his subquent history is not definitely known. According to one tradition he was stoned to death. Be that as it may he died as he had lived, a martyr to the cause of God, and left behind him a shining and glorious record.

VII. The Prophet Ezekiel.

The prophet Ezekiel lived at the same time as Jeremiah.

He also prophesied concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the fate of the king. In all respects his predictions agreed with those of Jeremiah except in one, where there was an apparent difference. Jeremiah said that Zedekiah should be carried in bonds to Babylon, and Ezekiel declared that Zedekiah should not see Babylon. The king condemned both prophets as untruthful because they did not agree, as he supposed, on this point. But we see that these predictions were both literally fulfilled. Zedekiah was taken bound to Babylon, but never saw the city, because his eyes were thrust out before he reached there.

LESSON IX.

ESTHER AND MORDECAI.

I. The Royal Feast.

It is generally agreed that Ahasuerus, of the Book of Esther, is the tyrannical and foolish Xerxes of profane history, who became king of Persia in 485 B. C. The character of this monarch is shown in his mad effort to scourge the sea because his fleet was destroyed by storm, and the punishment of death which he inflicted on his engineers because the bridge over Hellespont was swept away.

In the third year of his reign a great feast was held at Susa the capital of Persia. Nobles and princes from one hundred and twenty-seven provinces were present. It lasted for one hundred and eighty days and ended with a feast of all the people that were present in the palace. When the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded that Vashti, the queen, should be brought before his drunken guests that they might gaze upon her beauty. Vashti with becoming modesty refused to yield to this outrageous demand because it was against all the customs of the time for a woman to appear in public unveiled.

This crowd of leering drunkards decided that the conduct of the modest queen, if it were to go unpunished, would result in many women revolting against their husbands' authority. Therefore, Vashti was discrowned and driven from the royal palace.

II. Esther Chosen to be Queen.

On the return of Xerxes from his disastrous expedition against Greece, it was decided that he should choose another queen. Accordingly, all the most beautiful young women of the empire were gathered, so that the royal tyrant might make a suitable choice. Among them was an orphan girl whose

parents had, many years before, been carried captive from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. At the death of her parents, she had been adopted by a good relative named Mordecai, who at the time was employed in the king's service. Among the numerous candidates for this high honor, the orphan Jewess, Esther, won the king's heart and was elevated to the queenly dignity.

III. Haman's Infamous Proposal.

Highest in authority next to the king was one Haman an Agagite. He may have been a man of considerable ability and energy, but he was one of the most revengeful, vain, and unscrupulous characters in history. It seems that all who held subordinate positions in the empire were compelled to prostrate themselves before the impious tyrant. At his approach all the king's servants bowed in the dust except Mordecai; he "bowed not, neither did he reverence."

Haman regarded this as a great indignity on the part of Mordecai; so he resolved on revenge, and that too, on a large scale. Refusing to notice the insignificant Mordecai, he determined to deal a death blow to all the Jews in the Empire. Haman represented to the king that the Jews were a standing menace to the peace and perpetuity of the kingdom, and that the only advantage derived from their existence was the revenue they contributed. To offset this he proffered to pay $12,500,000 into the public treasury, if the king would issue an order for the wholesale massacre of this hated tribe.

The impulsive king accepted the infamous proposal. The thirteenth day of the twelfth month was fixed upon as the fatal day in which, "to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews both old and young, little children and women, in one day. This decree struck terror to the hearts of the Jews. In every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree went there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping and wailing."

When Mordecai heard of it, he "rent his clothes, and put on sack-cloth with ashes, and went into the midst of the city and cried with a loud and bitter cry, and came before the king's

gate." Overwhelmed with grief, as he was, he would not bow down to the despicable Haman. Now for the first time Esther learned of Haman's cruel purpose.

IV. Esther Intercedes for Her People.

Mordecai through a messenger charged her to supplicate the king in behalf of her threatened people. Esther was greatly distressed over the affair and explained to her foster-father that if she were to venture uncalled into the presence of the king she would be doomed to instant death, unless he extended the golden sceptre. She added that she had not seen the king for thirty days. If she should intrude herself upon the king's presence and lose her life would it avail her unhappy countrymen anything?

Her explanation was carried to Mordecai. In reply this wise man said, that the fatal decree included her, and if she refused to act, God would raise up deliverance from another source. He also reminded her that perhaps the deliverance of His people was the purpose which the Lord had in making her queen.

These arguments made clear her duty. She said, "Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go into the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish I perish."

What a noble resolve! What a splendid example of self-sacrifice! She is ready now for a martyr's fate if stern duty calls. Putting on her royal apparel she went alone into the court and tremblingly awaited the sign of life or death.

The capricious despot held out the sceptre. She was safe. She drew near and touched the top of it. The king addressing her said, "What wilt thou, queen Esther? And what is thy request? It shall be given thee to the half of the kingdom." Observe her skill. She does not make known her mission at once, but wisely prepares the way. She invited the king and Haman to a banquet, which invitation they graciously accepted. At

this banquet the king again inquired, "What is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee." The king must have felt that her wishes related to some weighty matter, when she again evaded, promising that she would make full answer to all his requests if he and Haman would favor her again with their presence at a banquet on the morrow.

V. Haman's Exultation.

"Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart: but when he saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai. And when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife.

"And told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king."

Haman said moreover, "Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself: and tomorrow am I invited unto her also with the king. Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew, sitting at the king's gate.

"Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and tomorrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made."

LESSON X.

ESTHER AND MORDECAI. (Continued.)

VI. Haman's Humiliation.

The very night that Haman spent exulting over his promotions and princely honors, was a sleepless night for the king. The hours wore away heavily and he tossed with restless anxiety upon his couch. Finally he asked that the records of his kingdom be read to him that he might refresh his memory concerning the great events of his life and thus while away the weary hours of darkness.

"And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Begthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door who sought to lay hands on the king." It would seem from this that Mordecai had saved the king from assassination, but through the excitement and stress of the times, he was forgotten and this deed went unrewarded. Now that the king was reminded of this neglect, he resolved to make some suitable testimonial of his gratitude.

It was now early dawn and Haman was astir making preparation for his revengeful execution of Mordecai. As he entered the court "the king said to him, what shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor?"

Then the pompous and conceited Agagite said to himself: "To whom would the king delight to do honors more than to myself." Little did this proud and wicked man dream that Omnipotent fingers were weaving about him a net of circumstances that would encompass him with disgrace and shut him up to speedy ruin.

In answer to the king's question Haman said, thinking of course that these honors were all intended for him: "Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head: and let this apparel and horse be deliv-

ered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honor, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor."

Then the king said to Haman, "Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken. Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor."

Haman, with covered head and weeping bitterly, hastened home and called together his friends and told them a story more dismal and humiliating than the one of the previous day was bright and self-glorifying. In the midst of this humiliation and defeat messengers came to conduct him to the banquet. So he plucked up courage and hied away to the banquet, thinking that the beautiful queen was still his friend.

VII. The Queen Makes Known Her Petition.

At the banquet the king was prompt to remind Esther that she had not yet made known her request. We cannot but admire her frank and skillful answer.

She said, "If I have found favor in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request: For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not [for such a sum], countervail the king's damage," in the loss of the thrifty and enterprising people to which she belonged. To be sold to death, to cruel butchery, simply to satisfy the revenge of one wicked man was too much for the queen to endure, so she staked her life in this appeal to the king.

"The king in his wrath said, "Who is he, and where is he,

that durst presume in his heart to do so?" And Esther said, "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen. And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath went into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen: for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king." Haman with all of his other meanness was a coward. He lacked the courage to meet the consequences of his own deeds. When the king returned to the banquet hall and saw Haman prostrate before the queen on the couch pleading for his life, he was still more enraged.

"And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon. So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified."

Thus swift and terrible retribution overtook the wicked and evil-designing Haman.

VIII. Mordecai Honored.

Esther was now glad to make known to the king, that Mordecai was her foster-father, and that he had cared for her from her childhood until she was honored with a place beside the ruler of the empire. As a mark of honor the king placed his ring upon Mordecai and made him prime minister. He was dressed in royal apparel of blue and white, and wore a great crown of gold, and garments of fine linen and purple, for Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame went throughout all the provinces, and he waxed greater and greater.

In answer to Esther's sympathetic plea to have Haman's cruel decree set aside, the king directed her and Mordecai to write to the Jews throughout the kingdom whatever they desired, to sign the king's name and attach thereto the royal seal.

The king's scribes were called and communications written not only to the Jews, but to the lieutenants, deputies, and

rulers of all the provinces from India to Ethiopia. And this message was transcribed into every language spoken in the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces.

Every available means was used to circulate this message as swiftly as possible. Post riders were despatched on horseback, on mules, camels and young dromedaries. This letter directed the Jews in every province, "to gather themselves together, and stand for their lives, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish all the power of the people and province that would assault them." This glad news was hailed with delight by the sorrowful Jews. "Whithersoever the king's decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews: for the fear of the Jews fell upon them."

When the day fixed for the assault upon the Jews arrived they were prepared and defended themselves and their families with almost supernatural strength, and succeeded in slaying twenty-five thousand of their assailants.

The day, toward which the doomed Jews looked with dark forebodings, and which threatened to be a time of mourning. was changed to one of great rejoicing. The Jews ever after commemorated this day with appropriate festivities. It is called the feast of Purim and all orthodox Jews observe it regularly now.

LESSON XI.

JOB.

"Job," is a drama. The main body of the book consists of the poetical speeches of the characters. The beginning and the end are prose statements concerning the "man of Uz," the principal character. The meter has the balanced rhythm common to Hebrew and ancient poetry. Like all poetry it should be read aloud that the ear may appreciate it. There is nothing trivial about the book, it deals with big ideas, and is full of mystery.

I. The Greatest Man of the East.

"The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord," cried Job as he rent his mantle and fell upon the ground and worshiped. Job owned seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred she asses. He had seven sons and three daughters, and was honored as the greatest of all the men of the East.

Job was a perfect and an upright man, fearing God and eschewing evil. Just as he was looking forward to passing the rest of his life in plenty and contentment, at one stroke all his hopes were swept away. A messenger had no sooner brought the news that Sabeans had carried off all the asses and oxen, when another appeared crying, "A fire from heaven hath burned up the sheep;" a third servant announced, "The Chaldeans have carried away the camels;" and lastly came one who said, "As thy sons and daughters were feasting in their elder brother's house there came a wind from the wilderness and the house hath fallen and they are dead."

Then at the first blow of bitter disappointment, when weak men would faint or go mad, Job shaved his head and said, "Blessed be the name of the Lord." This was not because he did

not love his children, for he not only provided them with the good things of the earth, but looked after their spiritual welfare by offering burnt offerings to the Lord in case they should have committed sin.

Not satisfied with the destruction he had brought upon Job, and this trial of his faith, Satan went a second time before the Lord. Satan asserted that Job served God for gain. He had said, "Take away his prosperity and see if his faith endures." So as Satan came from walking to and fro upon the earth, to present himself before the throne of God, the Lord said, "Still my servant Job holdeth fast his integrity." Satan believed that every man has his price so he answered, "Skin for skin, yea all that a man hath will he give for his life, but put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face." The Lord replied, "Behold, he is in thy hand."

Satan smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. His skin turned black and his bones burned with heat. Miserably he went and sat upon an ash mound and scraped himself with a potsherd. He did not complain for he said, "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."

II. The Three Friends.

When the three friends of Job, all princes in their own country, heard of his calamity, each journeyed from his own land. They were Eliphaz the Temanite, a visionary man, Bildad the Shuhite, a man of learning, and Zophar the Naamathite, a practical man. When they beheld Job from afar off they lifted up their voices and wept. They tore their clothes, sprinkled dust upon their heads, and for seven days sat and looked at Job; yet no one opened his mouth to speak.

Affected by their silent sympathy at last Job broke forth into lamentations. He cursed the day in which he was born. "Why is light given to a man whose day is hid? Oh that I had died when I was born, for then I should be where the wicked cease from troubling, where the weary are at rest."

The three men tried to convince Job that he must have

sinned and that this was the punishment, as the good were always prosperous. The three friends were rich. Eliphaz began courteously, "They that plow iniquity and sow wickedness, reap the same. I had a vision and a spirit passed before my eyes, saying, "Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall mortal man be more pure than his maker. Behold happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty. Yet man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward."

Job maintained that he was innocent of wrong-doing, and only longed for death. He said, "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope. I would not live alway." To Job, life was measured by events, not days. In the idle days of his disease he felt that time was flying and nothing doing. He turned on his friends, "What kind of comforters are you? Where is your pity? How forcible are right words but what does your arguing prove? Do you want to reprove the words of one that is desperate, which are as wind?"

Bildad spoke then, "Go search in the records of our fathers. God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers: till he fill thy mouth with laughing and thy lips with rejoicing. If thou hadst done right though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase."

In his woe Job refuted the arguments of his friends: "The earth is given unto the hands of the wicked. The Lord destroyeth the perfect and the wicked. It is not only the good that live long lives, are mighty in power and roll in wealth."

Zophar said almost brutally, "Shall a man full of lies and talk be justified? By what standard dost thou claim thou art pure. Who art thou to question God?"

Job answered, "Oh that I might talk with God and know wherefore I suffer. He alone judges my case. Though he slay me, yet will I trust him."

Again the three friends speak in turn, and a third time Eliphaz and Beldad uttered vain repetitions. The more they talk the stronger they hold to their opinions. They become excited and rail, but through it all, Job is the firm, patient listener clinging to his integrity with grim courage. In one thing all

three men agree, and that is that Job has committed some secret sin.

Bildad says mockingly to Job, "What thing are you to challenge the Almighty. Shall nature reverse itself because of you? The stars themselves are not pure in the Lord's sight, how much less so are you, a worm, the son of a worm?" Zophar contented himself with giving a lurid picture of the destruction of the wicked.

Job said, "No doubt you are the people and wisdom shall die with you. But I have understanding as well as you." Job can stand the jeers, and spitting of the rabble, but when his friends turn against him it is different. He cries, "Now I am a brother to dragons and companion to owls. My face is foul with weeping and on my eyelids is the shadow of death." Yet out of his despair rises a sublime faith. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold and not another's, though my reins be consumed within me."

III. Elihu the Presumptuous.

Elihu, a young man who had been listening to the discussion, stepped forward, bursting with talk. He asked pardon a great many times for daring to speak before his elders, but audaciously said that as they had argued very badly, perhaps they would listen to him. He blamed Job and said that what might seem injustice in the eyes of man was justice in the Lord's sight. Elihu was intelligent and had one great idea, far ahead of the views of the old men. It was that trouble was sent to perfect man, not as a punishment, for as the Lord was omnipotent, how could it affect him whether man was good or bad?

IV. Out of the Whirlwind.

Then came the voice of the Lord from the whirlwind. He does not explain differences; he argues not; he simply says, "I am Lord." Addressing Job, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? When the morning stars sang to-

gether, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" In words of grandeur he speaks of nature, "Canst thou bind the sweet influence of the Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Dost thou feed the lions and the raven? Canst thou send lightnings or number the clouds? Didst thou give his strength to the war-horse? Does the eagle mount up at thy command?" Job, overwhelmed with the power of God can only answer, "Behold, I am of small account."

Job had stood the test and proved Satan false. The Lord restored his wealth two fold, camels, sheep, and oxen. Again he became the greatest man of the East. He forgave his friends and interceded with the Lord for them. Seven sons and three daughters were again born to him, and his daughters were the fairest women in the land. One hundred and forty years later, Job was gathered to his fathers, full of years and prosperity.

LESSON XII.

EZEKIEL, EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.

Ezekiel, the son of Buzi, the great prophet during the Babylonian captivity, was, like his predecessor, Jeremiah, a priest. One tradition makes Ezekiel the servant of Jeremiah. He was taken captive in the captivity of Jehoiachin, eleven years before the destruction of Jerusalem. He was a member of a community of Jewish exiles who settled on the banks of the Chebar, a "river" or stream of Babylonia. It was by this river "in the land of the Chaldeans" that God's message first reached him. His call took place "in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity." We learn from an incidental allusion (chap. 24: 18)—the only refernce which he makes to his personal history—that he was married and had a house in his place of exile, and lost his wife by a sudden and unforeseen stroke. He lived in the highest consideration among his companions in exile, and their elders consulted him on all occasions.

His writings show that he devoted himself to the study of the sacred books of his people more than any other prophet either before or after the exile from Jerusalem. Frequent allusions are found among them to Genesis, Exodus, Hosea, Isaiah and the other prophets. His position in the history of the prophets is unique; Jeremiah had witnessed for God and warned the people in times of national corruption, but the people were still in their native land. But Ezekiel was far from Palestine, the land in which alone prophets had hitherto appeared. Thus he became the center in a foreign land around which those Jews who, through sorrow and affliction, were led to repentance, could gather. His words were the seeds of a revival which resulted in the return to Jerusalem, and he became the true forerunner of Ezra.

The last date he mentions is the 27th year of the captivity, so that his mission extended over 22 years. He is said to have

been murdered in Babylon by some Jewish prince whom he had convicted of idolatry, and to have been buried in the tomb of Shem and Arphaxad, on the banks of the Euphrates. The depth of his matter, and the marvellous nature of his visions, make him occasionally obscure. Hence his prophecy was placed by the Jews among the "treasures," those portions of Scripture which were not allowed to be read until the age of thirty.

I. Ezra.

The return of the Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem took place in three general movements—although many more may have returned at other dates and in less notable numbers. 1. In the first year of the reign of Cyrus, King of Persia a decree was issued encouraging any of the Jews who were under his dominion to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the holy temple, at the same time encouraging those who remained, to give every possible assistance to those who desired to return. Accordingly, under the leadership of Zerubbabel, 42,360 journeyed to Jerusalem, carrying with them much gold and silver and other treasure. In the second year after reaching Judea, the foundation of the temple was laid amid great rejoicing on the part of most of those who witnessed it, but among the older members, in whose memory lived the recollection of the former grandeur of the city and the sacred house, there was bitter weeping. 2. Eighty years after this, Ezra with a company of between six and seven thousand souls set out for Jerusalem. This noble man was the descendant of the priest Seraiah. From the brief statement given of him we are informed that he was a learned and pious priest residing in Babylon. He stood very high in the favor of the king, Artaxerxes.

The object of Ezra's return was more fully to establish the law of Moses, a task which his talents and training had eminently fitted him to perform. He is spoken of as "a ready scribe in the law of Moses." And "he had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord to do it, and to teach in Israel the statutes and judgments." From this we infer that he was not only familiar with the law, but possessed experience and

marked ability in expounding it. He set out from Babylon after assembling his company at the river Ahara, now unknown. Four months were occupied in crossing the desert. Besides carrying with them many valuables in the shape of vessels of gold and silver they had orders from the king authorizing the treasurers of the various provinces beyond the river, to furnish them with whatever was necessary for this sacred mission. Before entering upon this journey, Ezra called his people together, held a fast and invoked divine protection over the company during this perilous march across the desert. On arriving at Jerusalem he found, to his great distress, that many people had disregarded the law, which prohibited the Jews from intermarrying with the idolatrous people surrounding them, and that many of the princes had been foremost in forming this unhallowed alliance. In the deepest humiliation of spirit Ezra appealed to the Lord, deploring this offense. His profound sorrow over this grievous offense, moved the people to contrition, and they made a covenant with God to put away their strange wives and conform to the purity of the law of Moses.

II. The Law Expounded.

After the walls had been rebuilt under the direction of Nehemiah, the people gathered before one of the gates of the city to hear the law of Moses read. A pulpit of wood was erected from which Ezra expounded the law. "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." And thus for seven days they read and explained the law of the Lord given through Moses. On the eighth day a solemn assembly was held, the people recounted the Lord's goodness to them, and they made a covenant to serve Him.

The account of the death of Ezra is not given. Geikie says: "The Jews owe to Nehemiah the preservation of their nationality in a political sense, and are indebted to Ezra for the religious system which has kept them distinct and unperishable for more than two thousand years. The two were, together, the second founders of the nation."

III. Nehemiah.

Nehemiah was a great Jewish patriot and religious reformer who served as cupbearer for the Persian king, Artaxerxes This was a position of the highest confidence, since the responsibility of the king's life resided in it, and the one occupying the position came to be finally the monarch's confidential adviser. Many Jews had returned to Jerusalem and suffered great affliction and reproach, the walls of the city were torn down, and the gates were destroyed by fire. The news of this unhappy condition awakened the keenest regrets in the sympathetic Nehemiah. His sadness attracted the notice of the king and he said to Nehemiah, "Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? This is nothing else but sorrow of heart." Then he revealed to the king that the cause of his grief was the miseries of his brethren in Jerusalem. At the same time he begged permission to go and rebuild the walls and restore the gates. The king and queen willingly granted him leave of absence, which finally covered a period of twelve years. A sufficient guard was appointed to conduct him safely across the desert, which was infested with bands of robbers. The stewards of the forests near Jerusalem were directed to furnish him with timber and other material necessary for the work of reconstruction.

Nehemiah reached Jerusalem in the early summer of 457 B. C. On the third night after his arrival, with a small company of men, he rode about the city and inspected the wall, under moonlight. An assembly of the priests, nobles and leading men was summoned, and the prophet explained to them that the desire of his heart was to rebuild the walls of the city. It was forthwith decided that they should be restored.

As soon as work commenced the enemies of the Jews began to whisper that a revolt was intended, but the noble Nehemiah kept steadily at work paying no attention to the opposition. The people of Jerusalem, Jericho and the surrounding towns eagerly joined in the undertaking, each completing the portion assigned them. When the enemies saw that the people were in dead earnest in the matter and that the walls were daily

nearing completion, a plan was concerted to attack the workmen and stop the progress by violence.

Nothing daunted the ever-watchful Nehemiah; the workmen were now armed with weapons of defense, and all the men able to bear arms were called into service, one part standing guard while the other part worked. And thus with increased energy they pushed forward the work to completion. These conditions were quite parallel to the conditions under which the Nauvoo temple was completed.

IV. The Poor Relieved.

The open hostility of their enemies was not the greatest difficulty they encountered. The rich class of Jews had gained control of the land and the poorer class was grievously distressed for want of the necessaries of life. Nehemiah bitterly reproached the men who had thus taken advantage of their less fortunate brethren. In public assembly he explained the great sacrifice which had been made to redeem many of their kindred race who had been slaves to aliens. Then he exposed the shameless cruelty of those who had compelled their poor brethren at home, to part, not only with their property, but to sell their children to meet their debts. Nehemiah, during all the years he resided in Jerusalem, kept an open table daily for a hundred and fifty of the poor. Moved by this example of generosity and roused by the enthusiasm of their great leader, the debtors abandoned their claims and restored to the poor their former possessions. The walls were at last finished and their completion was celebrated with great solemnity. Besides improving the material conditions of his people, Nehemiah corrected many evils among them. The service in the temple was established and stringent laws to prevent the desecration of the Sabbath day were enforced.

No intimation is given of the time or place of Nehemiah's death, or of the details of his later life.

LESSON XIII.

KING BENJAMIN.

I. From Nephi to Benjamin.

The little colony that Lehi, under divine guidance, led from Jerusalem to South America had not been there very many years before there occurred a division. One party was headed by Nephi, the other by Laman; and both sides took the names of the leaders. Hence, throughout the Book of Mormon, we meet with the terms Nephites and Lamanites. Not only did they take the names, but they assumed or inherited the essential characteristics of their chiefs. Hence, too, we find the Nephites to be on the whole a peaceful, industrious, and progressive people, and the Lamanites rebellious, wild, and savage. There was another difference. The Nephites retained the natural whiteness of their skin, while the Lamanites, on account of their wickedness became dark, or copper-colored. During the hundreds of years that these two peoples occupied this land together, we find Nephites joining the ranks of the Lamanites, and sometimes the Lamanites going over to the Nephites; but in each case, it seems, there was generally a corresponding change in the color. That is to say, when Nephites became wicked and allied themselves with the Lamanites for purposes of evil, they generally became dark; and when the Lamanites repented of their sins and joined the church, they usually became a "white and delightsome people." According to various descriptions of the Lamanites given in the Book of Mormon, they were extremely low in the scale of civilization, much the same in fact as the Indians of North America were when discovered by Europeans. We find them living very often on raw meat, going without clothing except a "skin which was girded about their loins," encouraging revengeful feelings towards their more prosperous neighbors, and always taking the initiative in war.

For more than four hundred years these two peoples had remained practically distinct. The Nephites, during this period, had kept a careful record of their doings on metallic plates, the religious history on one set and the political history on another. These had been mainly in the hands of the prophets. Prosperity, for the most part, had attended the people, but every now and then destructive wars would break out between them and the Lamanites. Numerous prophets had arisen to give them the word of the Lord. Churches had been organized, and thousands knew almost as much about the personal ministrations of Jesus Christ in the flesh as we do now with the four "Gospels" in our hands, so clear and minute had been the predictions of their religious leaders.

II. Character of Benjamin.

Of Benjamin's life before he was made king we have no information at all. Indeed, we know very little of him during his long and peaceful reign—most probably because it was peaceful. Almost the only event that is given in detail is the one that we shall presently relate. He was the son of Mosiah, who was also a king, and after whom no doubt he named his son.

Benjamin was in the first place a successful and conscientious warrior. It seems that when he began to reign, his people were in considerable straits on account of the Lamanites. Very likely these savage people had previously captured some Nephite cities and could not be expelled. At any rate, a war broke out between the two races at the opening of Benjamin's rule which called for quick and decisive action on the part of the king. Arming himself with the famous sword of Laban, he headed a large force and completely routed his enemies. In the strength of the Lord, says Mormon, did Benjamin and his army contend against the Lamanites, until they had slain thousands of them and had driven the rest from the lands of the Nephites. No doubt, the phrase "driving the Lamanites out of the land," so often used in the Book of Mormon, meant a good deal more to these ancient people than it can mean to us. At all events, Mormon and Amalaki give Benjamin very high praise for his prowess in battle.

But the glory of Benjamin's life is that he was a man of peace. When it was necessary, he could handle the sword and the spear in such a manner as struck terror to the hearts of his enemies; but when there was no fighting to be done, none knew better how to cultivate the arts of peace. "King Benjamin was a holy man," declares the sacred historian, "and he reigned over his people in righteousness." That he was a good man is also evidenced by the fact that Amalaki, the last of the prophet-keepers of the sacred plates, delivered to the king the records that had been entrusted to him. We do not read, during this reign, of any wickedness on the part of the king, or any attempt to display his kingly authority. He knew too well that any needless grandeur, such as most other kings would desire, would require to be paid for out of a meagre public purse; and his conscience would not permit him to lay oppressive burdens on the backs of his people. So he generously sacrificed what he might have looked upon as his due, to the good of the nation. In fact, he went to such a point in his profound regard for his people's welfare as to labor with his hands to support himself and family rather than impoverish anyone by drawing a salary. His example in this respect was followed by other Nephite rulers.

III. The King Calls His People Together.

About three years before his death Benjamin requested his son Mosiah to have all the people meet at Zarahemla. "On the morrow," he said, "I shall proclaim unto this people out of mine own mouth, that thou art a king. And moreover I shall give them a name that they may be distinguished above all people which the Lord hath brought out of the land of Jerusalem." He went on to say that they had been a diligent people in keeping the commandments of the Lord. Mosiah did as he was asked, and accordingly the people collected at the chief city.

"And it came to pass that when they came up to the temple, they pitched their tents round about, every man according to his family, consisting of his wife, and his sons, and his

daughters, and their sons, and their daughters, from the eldest down to the youngest, every family being separate from another. And they pitched their tents round about the temple, every man having his tent with the door thereof towards the temple, that thereby they might remain in their tents, and hear the words which King Benjamin should speak unto them."

The people being unable to hear him, the king had a high tower built, which he ascended daily to address them; but so great was the multitude that, even then, many of them could not hear. So he ordered that his words be written and delivered to all those who were beyond the reach of his voice; and in this way everybody was informed concerning what he said.

IV. Substance of the Discourse.

He first sought to impress the people with the solemnity and importance of the occasion. "I have not," he said, "commanded you to come up hither to trifle with the words which I shall speak." Then he referred touchingly to his own infirmities, placing himself on a level with them. He called them to witness that he had sought to serve them all his days and had not desired gold nor silver nor any manner of riches, but that he had labored like the rest for his support. "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings," he declared, "ye are only in the service of your God"—a sentiment that it would be well for every ruler and officer to keep in mind even in our day. Finally, he compared the state of him who keeps the laws of God with the condition of him who does not. "Ye should consider," he added, "the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual."

But the principal part of his discourse concerned the future. He related a vision that he had received. An angel had informed him concerning the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. We must bear in mind that this was more than a hundred years before the first advent of our Savior. The time was not far distant, he said, when God would come down to dwell with men. He gave His name, the name of His mother, and many of the details of His life. He should suffer temptation, pain of

body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man could suffer, "except it were unto death;" the Jews should scourge him, and at last put him to death on the cross; on the third day He should rise from the dead, that a righteous judgment might come upon the children of men. His blood should atone for "those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam, who have died not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have ignorantly sinned." And the knowledge of the Savior should furthermore spread throughout every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Those who believed in Him should be saved, but wo unto those who rejected Him.

So wrought up were the people when they heard this that they fell to the ground, for the fear of the Lord had come upon them. They cried aloud: "Oh have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ, that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and that our hearts may be purified; for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth and all things, and who shall come down among the children of men." And the Spirit of God came upon them, and they received a remission of their sins.

This pleased the king very much. When he asked them if they believed all he had told them, they answered that they did. "We are willing," they said, "to enter into a covenant with our God to do his will, and be obedient to his commandments in all things that he shall command us, all the remainder of our days, that we may not bring upon ourselves a never-ending torment." And the king said: "Because of the covenant which ye have made, ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters." All the people, except only the children, entered into this covenant, and their names were written down.

Then he consecrated his son Mosiah to be king in his place, giving him instructions concerning the affairs of the kingdom, and appointing priests "to stir up the people to a remembrance of their oaths."

After this King Benjamin lived three years, but the people for generations treasured his name in their hearts.

LESSON XIV.

ABINADI.

The events we have just narrated in connection with the life of King Benjamin occurred in the land of Zarahemla, a place which "is supposed to have been north of the head waters of the river Magdalena," those we are now to consider happened in the land of Nephi, or as it is sometimes called Lehi-Nephi, a place which is thought to have been "in or near Equador," both countries being in South America. But before we can understand the circumstances connected with this part of Nephite history, it is necessary for us to know how it happened that there were two different places so far apart occupied by the Nephites at the same time.

I. Zarahemla and the Land of Nephi.

Most probably the first home of Lehi and his colony on coming to America was Chili, that long, narrow strip of land lying along the western shores of South America. From here the descendants of this prophet drifted northward, most likely along the sea coast, till they reached a spot somewhere near what is now called Equador, which they named Nephi, after their leader.

In course of time, however, difficulties arose between them and the Lamanites, and so it became necessary for them to seek another home where they might not be molested by their enemy. This move occurred in the reign of Mosiah, the father, that is, of the Benjamin of whom we read in the previous lesson. He led his entire people into the wilderness with "preachings and prophesyings," we are told, till they reached a place which they found to be already occupied by a race hitherto unknown to the Nephites. These people were the descendants of Mulek, who was a son of Zedekiah, king of Jerusalem, and who came to America with a small company about eleven years

after Lehi left the Holy City. And they had lived here not only without any communication with any other people, but also without any records of their own doings or of their ancestors the Jews. We can easily believe, therefore, that when these two races came together neither was able to understand what the other said, by reason of the corruption which the language of the Mulekites had undergone. This place was called Zarahemla. The Nephites taught the Mulekites their language and religion; and eventually the two people became one.

II. Zeniff Returns to the Land of Nephi.

After the Nephites had lived at Zarahemla for some time, Zeniff led a company into the wilderness with the purpose of going to the land of Nephi and re-possessing it. An attempt to do this, it appears, had been previously made, but had failed on account of internal dissensions. This was a daring undertaking on the part of Zeniff and his followers. They succeeded, however, in reaching the borders of their former home. Permission was asked of the king of the Lamanites to occupy the land, and was granted with a readiness that should have surprised them and put them on their guard. So the company reoccupied the city of Nephi and two or three others lying in the neighborhood. Zeniff afterwards understood the real motive of Laman, the king, in permitting him and his people to live there on such easy terms; for after a while we find him saying: "Now it was the cunning and the craftiness of King Laman, to bring my people into bondage, that he yielded up the land that we might possess it."

After they had been there for about twelve years, Laman began to grow uneasy lest the Nephites should become too numerous and powerful. No doubt during these years the people had greatly prospered, for they were industrious and economical in their living. But this very prosperity had excited the cupidity of the thriftless and revengeful Lamanites. Meantime, Zeniff had become king of the colony.

One day, away to the south in the land of Shilom, while the Nephites were feeding their flocks and tilling their land,

the Lamanites suddenly pounced upon them, killing many and running off the animals. The people of course, being totally unprepared for such an attack, fled in consternation to the city of Nephi. Zeniff began the immediate preparation for a vigorous defense. He armed his people with whatever weapons they might lay their hands upon, and drove the enemy with terrible slaughter from the land. In one day and night, we are informed, they killed three thousand and forty-three, but two hundred and seventy-nine of their own men had fallen. Once again in Zeniff's lifetime the Lamanites came against them to plunder and to murder; and again they were driven from the land.

III. The Reign of Noah.

But Zeniff died and Noah his son became king. Then there was a change. Being a bad man, he surrounded himself with bad counselors. He removed from the priesthood all those who had been appointed by his father, filling their places with men who would not be likely to reprove him in sin. He built a "spacious palace," with a throne in the midst, all of fine wood, ornamented with gold and silver, and precious things; and taxed the people very heavily to pay for all this pomp and display. One fifth of all their property he required to support himself and his priests. And he built a high tower that he might overlook the land of Shilom and Shemlon, which were in the hands of the Lamanites. The Book of Mormon names some horrible sins that this king and his priests committed, and then goes on to say that the people followed these evil examples. So the general condition of king, priests, and people, especially during the end of Noah's reign, was extremely bad. At this particular time, a signal victory over the Lamanites appears to have "puffed them up in the pride of their hearts." "Fifty of us," they exclaimed, "can stand before thousands of Lamanites." And they boasted in their own strength.

IV. Abinadi Appears.

Now there was a man among the people whom the Lord

raised up as a prophet. His name was Abinadi. It is probable that he was one of the priests of the good king Zeniff. At any rate, he came predicting that evil would befall the people for their wickedness unless they repented.

"Thus saith the Lord," he said, "Wo unto you, for I have seen your abominations. Except ye repent, I will visit you in mine anger, delivering you into bondage and affliction. And it shall come to pass that when you cry unto me, I will be slow to hear your cries."

Of course this bold language, when it reached the ears of the king, made him very angry. "Who is this Abinadi," he demanded, "that I and my people should be judged of him? Bring him hither, that I may kill him!"

But Abinadi could not be found. He had suddenly and mysteriously disappeared. For two years no one heard anything of him. Then he came back disguised.

But he had the same message to deliver. He predicted that the people, because of their sins, should go into bandage, and be smitten on the cheek. Vultures and dogs should eat their flesh. Burdens should be lashed upon their backs, and they should be driven like dumb animals. Insects should pester their land and devour their grain. "The Lord," said Abinadi, "will cause you to howl all the day long! And the king," he went on, "shall be as a garment in a hot furnace, as a dry stalk of the field, or as the blossom of the thistle, fully ripe, in a wind storm."

V. Abinadi Before the King.

When all this reached the king's ears, his wrath knew no bounds. But there was no need for a second command to capture Abinadi, for the priests had already done this. Doubtless the prophet, when brought before the king, looked about him on the fine trumpery that Noah had surrounded himself and the priests with. But he stood there unabashed, his soul burning with his divine message. And now the opportunity had come to deliver it in the very presence of the king.

The priests took him in hand. They wished at once to

display their own knowledge of the Scriptures and to demonstrate Abinadi's ignorance of them.

"What is the meaning," they sneeringly began, "of the passage: 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings?'"

But Abinadi replied, "Wo unto you for perverting the ways of the Lord; for if ye understand these things, ye have not taught them." Then he enumerated a long catalogue of their sins. They had broken the Sabbath; they had worshiped false gods; they had been guilty of immoral conduct; and they had encouraged the people to do likewise.

"Away with this fellow!" shouted the king. "Away with this fellow, and kill him!"

The priests, only too willing to execute this murderous command, put forth their hands to catch the prophet. But he said:

"Touch me not! for God will smite you if you lay your hands on me till I have delivered my message. Then you may work your will." The Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and his face shone as the face of Moses did when he came down from Sinai after speaking forty days with God. The priests, therefore, stood back.

Then he spoke to them of Christ. But they denied all knowledge of Him, and attempted to justify themselves because they had taught the law of Moses. Abinadi showed that this very law condemned them. None, he said, could have known better that the Mosaic law would be done away in Christ. And he went on to speak in prophetic language of the minutest particulars in Messiah's life on the earth, of the purpose of his coming, and of many sayings in the Scriptures referring to Him. Jesus was not to be a mere man, but God manifest in the flesh.

This last statement was a signal for a fresh outburst on the part of the priests. "Now we know," they shouted, "that thou art worthy of death, for thou sayest that God shall dwell among men. For this cause, unless thou recall thy words, thou shalt die!"

"I have permitted myself to fall into your hands," was the

answer, "and I am willing to suffer death, that my words may stand as a testimony against you at the last day."

This frightened the king, and he offered at this point to release Abinadi. But the priests clamored for his life, crying out, "He has reviled the king!"

And they took the prophet and applied burning faggots to his skin. When the flames began to eat his flesh, he cried aloud to them:

"Behold, even as ye have done unto me, so shall your posterity do to others who keep the commandments of God. But ye shall be smitten, and scattered even as a flock is driven by wild beasts. Ye shall be hunted in the wilderness, and suffer death by fire even as I do!" And he died with a prayer on his lips.

VI. Abinadi's Prophecies Fulfilled.

Now, among the priests of Noah there was one whose name was Alma and who had been converted through the teachings of Abinadi. But he had been thrust out of the king's presence for taking the prophet's part during the trial which we have just related. Later he succeeded in converting about four hundred and fifty people, and baptized them in the waters of Mormon. These people used to go often to Mormon to hear Alma preach. But once they were discovered by the king's servants, who had been sent out to see what movement was going on among the people. Noah sent out an army to find them, but the army returned unsuccessful. For Alma, under divine guidance, had taken his people into the wilderness. The Lord finally led them to the land of Zarahemla.

As this army was returning there occurred a division, and some breathed threatenings against the king. Gideon was among the latter class. He swore that he would kill Noah, and later actually attempted to carry out this threat. The king ran to the tower, where he would have been slain, had it not been for the fact that the Lamanites just then were coming against them.

Instead of fighting, the cowardly king ordered all the people to flee into the wilderness before the enemy. While doing

this they were overtaken, and many of them slain. When Noah saw the slaughter of so many of his people, he issued a second command, more cowardly than the other, for the men to abandon the women and children. Some of them, including, of course, the king and his priests, actually did this. But later a number took shame for such a despicable act, and proposed to go back and perish with their families. The king, however, attempted to prevent this, and was taken by the enraged men and burned to death. The priests would have suffered a similar fate but for their escape. Later they were hunted like wild beasts of the forest.

Those who refused to desert their wives and children were taken captive by the Lamanites, brought back to Nephi, and permitted to live there on the condition that they would deliver up half of all they owned and promise to pay tribute to the Lamanite king from year to year of one half of what they produced. For a time there was peace. Limhi, Noah's son, was made king. But the rest of Abinadi's prophecy had to be fulfilled. Accordingly, the Lamanites became troublesome. They smote the people of Limhi on the cheeks; they laid heavy burdens on their backs, and drove them like animals. Every detail of Abinadi's predictions was fulfilled with horrible exactness.

Finally, the people were humbled to the dust, and they called upon the Lord. Subsequently a delegation that had been sent out by King Mosiah at Zarahemla found them and they all stole away in the night, returning to the main body of the Nephites.

LESSON XV.

ALMA THE YOUNGER.

In Alma, commonly known as the younger, we have a man, who, for tireless energy, zeal, and firmness in holding to convictions, has few equals in the history of religion. In some of the outer circumstances of his life there is much that reminds us of the Apostle Paul among the early Christians.

I. How Alma Was Converted.

You will remember that when Alma the prophet (the father of this Alma), who had been a priest of Noah in the land of Nephi, succeeded in escaping from that wicked king, he was led with his people to the land of Zarhemla. Mosiah II, the son of Benjamin, was then king. Alma and his converts were received with joy by the main body of Nephites, among whom the new prophet made himself extremely useful in dispensing the word of God. He worked hard and continuously for the conversion of the people, and met, it appears, with a good deal of success; for there prevailed a universal excitement over religion.

Now this Alma had a son whose name was also Alma. He was apparently a young man of independent character, winning manners and fluent speech. Not only did he not believe the teachings of his father, but he considered it his duty openly to combat them. So he went about zealously trying to undo the work of his father. His personal address and plausable reasoning won him many adherents, and people began to take sides for and against the church. In this work of destruction he was aided materially by four sons of Mosiah the king.

It is strange, but nevertheless true, that skepticism always endeavors to tear down; it never attempts to build anything. Moreover, it has often been found very intolerant. Whenever, therefore men find themselves tearing down, when they should

be building up, or interfering with the rights of belief in others, they should pause and think upon their actions and opinions. Alma and his followers were unwilling that people should believe in the church; hence they attempted, by persecution, to make them apostatize.

This conduct on the part of the young Alma grieved his father very much. Knowing the evil that his son was doing the people and the real consequences of it, he reasoned with the young man, urged him not to speak against the work of God, and prayed over him in secret, night and day. And no doubt the king was affected in the same manner over his sons' actions. Very likely the fathers took this conduct the more to heart because they knew that a good deal of the influence exerted by the young men was due to the fact that they were their sons. But argument and prayer alike seemed in vain; the young men showed no signs of relaxing in their opposition to the Church. Events, however, were permitted to take their own course until it was manifest that the dissenters were actually persecuting those who chose to believe differently; for there seems to have been absolute religious freedom among the Nephites, and anyone might believe as he pleased providing he did not interfere with the belief of any one else. So Mosiah, when the apostates began interfering with the rights of the churchmen, issued a command prohibiting any such intolerance. Nevertheless, the five young men continued to teach their pernicious doctrines.

One day as they were going about on their evil errand, an angel of the Lord appeared to them, descending in a cloud, and speaking with a voice of thunder that caused the ground to shake. So great was the consternation of Alma and his companions that they fell to the earth.

"Alma," said the angel, "arise and stand forth. Why dost thou persecute the Church of God? The Lord hath said, 'This is my church, and I will establish it; and nothing shall overthrow it, save it be the wickedness of my people. If thou wilt of thine own self be destroyed, seek no more to destroy the work of God.'" Alma and the others arose.

Then the heavenly messenger pointed out to them the

wickedness of their conduct in misleading the people, and rehearsed some of the marvelous things in the history of the Nephites. At the conclusion of the angel's words the young men again fell to the ground overwhelmed with astonishment. Alma was struck dumb, and became so weak that he had to be carried home.

His father rejoiced when he saw his son's condition, for he knew that it was the power of God that had affected him. After three days and nights Alma "opened his mouth" and spoke to the people who had assembled to witness so great a miracle. Of Alma's change of feelings we may judge by his words on recovering his speech. "My soul," he said, "hath been redeemed from the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity. I was in the darkest abyss; but now I behold the marvelous light of God. My soul was racked with eternal torment; but I am snatched, and my soul is pained no more."

Of course, the news of this wonderful change in these young men by which, from perverters of the way, they had become zealous workers for God, soon spread among the people. Many of those who had been led away by the sophistries of Alma and his companions repented of their sins and joined the church.

II. Alma as Chief Judge.

At the death of Mosiah the government of the Nephites underwent a change. Up to this time it had been a kingdom, but now it became a republic, or better still, a kind of democracy. This change occurred in the year 91 B. C., five hundred and nine years after Lehi left Jerusalem.

Mosiah had two reasons for establishing the republic. In the first place, though he appears to have thought that the ideal government is a kingdom where the king is led by the counsels of the Lord—a theocracy, as we shall call it today —still he saw that under conditions such as prevailed among his people at the time, kingship had some very grave dangers. "Behold," he said, "how much iniquity doth one wicked king cause to be committed, yea and what destruction!" "Ye cannot dethrone an iniquitous king," he went on to say, "save it be

through much contention and shedding of blood." All of which is confirmed by the history of nations other than the Nephite. So he thought that his people would better not attempt to perpetuate the kingdom for fear of calamities which the future might bring on the nation.

But there was another consideration that induced him to suggest this change. Now the Nephite kingship, it seems, was hereditary. Hence upon the death of Mosiah, it would naturally devolve upon his son Aaron. Aaron, however, had been converted with Alma; he having been one of those who sought to destroy the work of God. He was now so thoroughly imbued with a desire to spend his life in the ministry, that his father was unable to persuade him to accept the office of king The other sons likewise refused it and for the same reason. So there was no alternative for Mosiah than either to give the kingdom to another or make a change in the government. With a deep insight into poor human nature, he made this profound observation to his people: "And who knoweth but what my son to whom the kingdom doth belong, shall turn to be angry [in case, that is, another family had been given it], and draw part of this people after him, which would cause wars and contentions among you, which would be the cause of the shedding of much blood." We cannot but admire the wisdom of the king in dictating, and the submission of the people in adopting, at this crisis, such a wise measure for the future safety and perpetuity of the nation.

So the Nephite people were thereafter governed by judges. There was one chief judge besides inferior judges. "This chief judge, elected by the people, was the supreme governor of the land, the chief executive of the laws. His oath of office bound him to judge righteously, and to keep the peace and the freedom of the people, and grant unto them sacred privileges to worship the Lord their God, to support and maintain the laws of God all his days, and to bring the wicked to justice, according to their crimes." It seems that the inferior judges were amenable to the chief judge, while the chief judge was in turn amenable to a court composed of a number of inferior judges. Alma, the subject of this lesson, was the first chief judge; and

from the time of his father's death he had also been the head of the church. This change in the Nephite government altered the manner of reckoning time also, for instead of counting from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem, the Nephites now reckoned from the year when the judges began to reign.

In the beginning of the fifth year of the reign of the judges, there arose a difficulty which had to be settled by the sword. A man named Amlici, a "wise and cunning man as to the wisdom of the world," succeeded in gaining many followers in his attempts to subvert the church and the government. He wanted to be king. Alma obtained the voice of the people on the question as to whether Amlici should be king, and they returned an unquestionable no; though the following of the would-be-king was so great as to cause the better and more numerous class no little apprehension concerning their political and religious freedom.

But this did not by any means end the matter. The malcontents attempted to make Amlici king anyway, coming out in open rebellion against the government. But the others were prepared for them. A battle ensued in which the Amlicites were routed. Presently, however, they returned with an innumerable host of Lamanites. This vast army was met in another place and defeated with heavy loss on both sides, though that of the Lamanites and Amlicites was double that of the Nephites. In both of these battles Alma led the forces of his people. A third time did the incorrigible Amlicites come against the government army, and with the same result. This ended the bitter struggle, but there was mourning and lamentation in all the Nephite cities over the slain of their people.

LESSON XVI.

ALMA THE YOUNGER. (Continued).

III. Mission to Ammonihah.

In the ninth year of the Nephite Republic, there grew up what the Book of Mormon terms "great inequality" among the people. Some lifted themselves up in their pride, "turning their backs upon the needy, and the naked, and those who were hungry, athirst, or sick and afflicted;" while others abased themselves "succouring those who stood in need, feeding the hungry, and suffering all manner of afflictions for Christ's sake." Alma, therefore, resigned his chief judgeship in order that he might devote his entire time trying to remedy this condition of affairs. Accordingly, he began his ministry at Zarahemla, and afterwards extended it to Gideon, Ammonihah, and other cities, meeting with considerable success. But for several reasons we shall speak in detail only of his labors among the inhabitants of Ammonihah in the tenth year.

As soon as Alma reached this place, he began preaching the word of God, but the people were given over to iniquity. They "withstood his words, reviled him, spit upon him," and finally cast him out of the city. Weighed down with sorrow and disappointment, the good man was making his way towards another place, when an angel appeared to him. "Blessed art thou, Alma," said the heavenly personage; "lift up thy head and rejoice, for thou hast great cause. Thou hast been faithful in keeping the commandments of God from the time when thou didst receive thy first message from him. Behold, I am he that did deliver it to thee. I am sent to command thee to return to Ammonihah and preach unto the people that except they repent the Lord God will destroy them."

Obedient to this divine mandate, Alma returned to the city. Now, having had no food for several days, he asked a man, whom he met, for something to eat. "I am a Nephite,"

said the man, "and I know that thou art an holy prophet of God, for thou art the man whom an angel said in a vision, Thou shalt receive; therefore come with me into my house, and I will impart unto thee of my food; and I know that thou wilt be a blessing unto me and my house." This man's name was Amulek. Alma went into the house and ate. Afterwards he taught Amulek the gospel, resting for a time before beginning to preach.

In a few days the word of the Lord came to Alma: "Go with my servant Amulek and prophesy to the people, saying, 'Repent ye, for thus saith the Lord, except ye repent, I will visit this people in mine anger.'" So Alma and his companion, filled with the Holy Spirit, began their mission to this fated city.

There is not sufficient space to dwell in detail on what these prophets said. It is sufficient to say that they delivered their message of warning with the utmost faithfulness, and that they were combatted by all the wisdom and cunning that the perverse people could muster. They spoke of Christ and his work of redemption for mankind, of the manifestations of God in the history of the Nephites and Lamanites, and of the teachings of the holy Scriptures regarding all these things. They warned them that, unless they repented, they and their city should be utterly destroyed.

Zeesrom, a lawyer, was their chief opponent. The Book of Mormon declares that he was "expert in the devices of the devil that he might destroy that which is good." Urged on by the people, he kept asking questions of Alma and Amulek for the purpose of confusing them. But the prophets, through inspiration of the Lord, turned all the questions against the crafty lawyer. Not only did Zeesrom endeavor to entangle them in argument, but he assumed them to be so hypocritical and insincere as to be bribed into self-contradictions. "Here is six onties of silver," he said to Amulek, "and all these will I give thee if thou wilt deny the existence of a supreme Being." But Amulek answered that the lawyer himself believed in God. only he affected disbelief for purposes of evil. He knew that Zeesrom had no intention of giving the money. Alma and his

companions were able, by inspiration, to understand the very thoughts of Zeesrom, and time after time, told him the intents of his heart. Caught in his evil devices, Zeesrom began to inquire in real earnest concerning God, till he was finally converted to the truth. As soon, however, as this occurred, he was thrust out of the city as a heretic. Others likewise were converted, and were similarly cast out.

The unbelievers took Alma and Amulek and bound them, hand and foot. Afterwards, in their insane fury, they secured the wives and children of those who had accepted the words of these prophets and cast them into the fire, in the very presence of these men of God, in the hopes, perhaps, that they would recant. But they remained firm, though tortured in soul on account of the horrible scene they were compelled to look upon. "Let us stretch forth our hands," said the compassionate Amulek, as he saw the pains of the women and children who were consuming in the fire; "Let us stretch forth our hands, and exercise the power of God which is in us, and save them from the flames." But Alma, though equally touched, replied that the Spirit constrained him not to do so; for the Lord would receive these people unto himself, and their testimony should stand against those who had put them to death.

Another kind of cruelty was reserved for Alma and Amulek. From this scene of burning they were conducted to prison. The chief judge of the city stood before them and said, smiting them on the cheek: "After what ye have seen, will ye preach again unto this people, that they shall be cast into a lake of fire and brimstone?" But they answered not a word. And he smote them again. Many lawyers, judges, priests, and teachers came to taunt them. But they could not be induced to speak. "Will ye again condemn our law?" they asked. "If ye have such great power, why do ye not deliver yourselves? How shall we look when we are damned?" And many other such blasphemous questions they put. Still the men of God said nothing. Then they were smitten and spit upon. This continued for three days, all of which time they had been given no food or water. But this brutal treatment was continued a

little too far. For, one day, as the chief judge and his evil company were going through this derisive performance, the power of God came upon Alma and Amulek and they rose to their feet. Their bands were loosed; some of the mockers fell to the earth in the utmost terror, others fled; the earth shook mightily, the walls of the prison were rent in twain, and the entire building tumbled to the ground, covering the wicked revilers, but leaving Alma and his companion standing in the midst unhurt. The people, hearing the crash of the falling building, came running to the scene; but when they beheld the despised prophets coming forth unbound while their own men had been buried in the ruins, they fled in dismay "as a goat fleeth with her young from two lions." Alma and Amulek left the city never to return.

Some time after this, the hosts of Lamanites, burning with vengeance at some injury they imagined themselves to have received at the hands of the Nephites, came pouring forth out of the wilderness and, in true Indian fashion, fell upon this fatal population of Ammonihah as being the first in their path, and put men, women, and children to the edge of the sword, demolishing everything that served to remind them of their fair-skinned kinsmen the Nephites. For years the place of the melancholy Ammonihah was known as the Desolation of the Nehors. Thus a swift and terrible retribution descended upon this iniquitous people.

IV. Korihor, the Anti-Christ.

In the latter part of the seventeenth year, a man by the name of Korihor made an atempt to lead away the people from Christ. He cried out against the law and the Church at Zarahemla and other places where he thought he could obtain a following. He declared that the teachings of the prophets concerning Christ were only vain traditions, that there is no such thing as a knowledge of the future, that the idea that one has remission of sins is the result of a frenzied mind, and that whatever a man does is no crime. He succeeded in leading away many persons into a sinful life.

This man went over to the land of Jershon to preach his

doctrine among some converted Lamanites—of whom we shall learn something in our next lesson;—but these people took him bound to the chief judge of the land, and the high priest. After a violent scene before these men, in which the bold Korihor acted and spoke most extravagantly, he was taken to Zarahemla before Alma and the Chief Judge of all the Nephites. Here he repeated his impudent language, falsely charging his judges with wasting the substance of the people and teaching them absurd doctrines concerning Christ. He repeatedly demanded of Alma a sign that he might be convinced. Alma disclaimed any desire to call down any curse upon the man, but finally told him that, since it was better that one man should perish than that many innocent people should lose their souls, he should have a sign: he should be stricken dumb. And he was. After this he confessed, in writing, that he had all along known that he was in error, but he had nevertheless continued in his evil work. Subsequently, he was killed violently, being run upon, by the Zoramites, of whom we are next to hear.

V. Mission to the Zoramites.

Taking several others to help him, Alma went to a people calling themselves Zoramites. They were descendants of the original Zoram, who came from Jerusalem with Lehi. When the missionaries got among the people, they were amazed beyond measure at the strange manner of worship which the Zoramites indulged in. A high pulpit, called a Rameumpton, had been erected, large enough for only one person to stand in at a time. Once a week each worshiper would enter this pulpit and go through the most extraordinary performances, repeating the same prayer each time. Every other day these people were not so scrupulous in their conduct, for they never spoke of their god until they returned to their strange pulpit. Only the rich, however, were premitted to worship thus. The poor were cast out. The prohibited part of the people were in sore distress upon being deprived of this privilege, and went to Alma and his companions disconsolate. But these men pointed out to them that they were not in reality losing anything but

rather unconsciously preserving their souls from idolitry. They preached to them the true way and exposed the folly of the Zoramite worship. Then Alma and the other missionaries went over to the land of Jershon.

As soon as they had gone, the religious teachers of the Zoramites called the people together for the purpose of finding out how they stood in the matter of the new teachings they had heard. They did not, however, reveal their purpose in doing this. Upon finding out that a large number were believers in the words of Alma, they thrust all of them out of the city. These outcasts went over to the land of Jershon where Alma and his companions had gone. In the lesson on Moroni we shall see the consequence of this act on the part of the Zoramites.

VI. Alma Disappears.

After this Alma called his sons together and gave them, each in turn, a blessing, after the manner of the ancient Jewish patriarchs. The blessings of Helaman, Shiblon, and Corianton are recorded in the Book of Alma from page 341 to page 359. He entrusted to his son Helaman all the records which he had made and kept, with strict injunctions regarding them. Then he went out of the land, apparently with the intentions of going to the land of Melek. But no one ever saw him afterwards, and it is supposed that he was translated, like Elijah, without tasting death.

LESSON XVII.

AMMON: THE MISSIONARY.

It has often been the case in religious history that when men of strong, independent character have been converted to the truth, after opposing it vigorously, they have thrown themselves into their work with astonishing zeal and energy, and become a source of great strength to the truth. Such was Paul among the early Christians, and such too were Alma and Ammon among the Nephites.

I. Mission to the Lamanites.

Ammon was a son of King Mosiah II. He was converted with Alma and others while they were seeking to destroy the work of God. Subsequently, he refused to accept the kingdom from his father because he preferred to spend the rest of his days in the ministry. Alma, Ammon, and others went about the land of Zarahemla, after their conversion, striving zealously to repair the injuries they had done the Church, publishing to all the things they had heard and seen and explaining the Scriptures to those who would listen.

Ammon and other sons of Mosiah were under the impression that they ought to go to the land of Nephi and other places among the Lamanites for the purpose of seeing what they might do towards converting this wayward race. So they asked permission of their father for themselves and others whom they had selected, to go on this mission. Mosiah inquired of the Lord as to the wisdom of this idea, and received the answer: "Let them go up, for many shall believe on their words, and they shall have eternal life; and I will deliver thy sons out of the hands of the Lamanites." So the king gave them permission to go.

Now, this was in reality a daring undertaking. From the time of their separation in the days of the first Nephi till now

the Nephites and the Lamanites had entertained strong enmity towards each other. On the part of the Nephites it took the form of resisting Lamanite aggressions; on the part of the latter it became a thirst for plunder and blood. At this time, we are told, the Lamanites were a savage and ferocious people, living partly in tents, though some appear to have tried to imitate the ways of the Nephites, worshiping idols, and living on the fruits of the chase. For the most part they were a lazy and thriftless people, always cherishing the bitterest feelings of hatred and revenge for their white neighbors, and following them up with purposes of plunder and destruction. In order to understand what follows, it is necessary for us to know that there was one chief king over all the Lamanites or as we would say today, emperor, and under him a number of inferior kings. Such were the people to whom Ammon and his companions essayed to preach the word of God.

So this small band set out towards the land of the Lamanites, taking swords, spears, and bows and arrows for the purpose of supplying them with food on the way. This journey occupied "many days," during which they were told, in answer to their prayers, that the Lord would bless them, only they must be "patient under afflictions," and set good examples before the Lamanites. At this they took heart, and continued their journey. Arrived at the borders of Lamanite territory, they separated, trusting to meet again at the end of their work. Ammon went to the land of Ishmael.

II. Ammon and King Lamoni.

Ammon's reception by the Lamanites appeared at first to forebode evil. He was taken bound before the King, Lamoni, who, however, released him accepting him for a servant as soon as he learned that it was Ammon's intention to remain in the land. He offered him his daughter in marriage, but of course Ammon refused to accept her.

The third day found the Nephite missionary with other servants, herding the king's flocks near the waters of Sebus. This seems to have been the principal watering place for miles

around, and others also drove their flocks hither. On several occasions the animals of the king had been driven off and scattered by some plundering Lamanites and the herders, when they returned home, had been put to death for their lack of watchfulness. On this occasion too, the flocks of Lamoni were scattered, but through the good management of Ammon they were collected. Upon getting them together, Ammon went out alone to fight with those Lamanites who had scattered the flocks. They, of course, feared nothing on his approach. But like David of old, Ammon threw stones at them with his sling, and one after another fell before him until six had been killed. Meantime, the Lamanites were unable to hit Ammon. So they came at him with clubs, but each arm, as it was raised to strike, was cut off with Ammon's sword. The leader was slain with the same weapon. The rest of the Lamanites fled in dismay as from a great army. The servants of Lamoni looked on in the utmost amazement, thinking that a supernatural being had come among them.

When all this was told the king, he said, "Surely, the Great Spirit has come to reprove me for killing my other servants." And he was fearful. Later Ammon came in and was asked to remain, for the king wanted to speak with him. So Ammon stayed. But Lamoni, out of fear, did not say anything. Ammon, however, through inspiration, understood the cause of the king's fears, and told him what it was. This only confirmed Lamoni's suspicions; for he said, "He reads my thoughts." Then Ammon told him of the true God, whom the king had designated the Great Spirit. At the conclusion of Ammon's talk, the king, overcome by the power of God, fell down unconscious.

Two days passed, during which there occurred no change in the king's condition. The queen asked Ammon whether she had not better bury her husband; but he replied that she had not, for on the morrow at a certain time the king should revive. At the designated time the king revived, and in the presence of the queen, Ammon, and the servants, related a vision he had seen. Then he fell to the earth again, and also the queen, Ammon, and all but one of the servants. This servant, whose

name was Abish, and who had been already converted, called in all the Lamanites, within reach, thinking to convert them by this unusual spectacle. They came flocking in, but there was a difference of opinion as to the cause of this strange happening. One Lamanite went up to the prostrate form of Ammon to kill him, but he fell dead on the spot. At last this woman servant took the queen by the hand, who immediately arose, and began to bless the name of God for having shown her the errors of her people. Subsequently, all arose. The king and Ammon spoke to the people on religion, and large numbers were converted and baptized.

III. Ammon Goes to Middoni.

After all this, Lamoni asked Ammon to go with him to the city of Nephi, where his father lived, who was king over all the land. Lamoni, it appears, wished to conciliate his father, who was angry because he had not come to a feast which the old king had made for his sons. Upon inquiry of the Lord, Ammon was told not to go for the king would kill him, but to go instead to the land of Middoni, where his brethren were in prison. So Lamoni and Ammon went to Middoni. On their way they met Lamoni's father, who reproved his son for not coming to the feast. Lamoni told him what had happened in his kingdom. Then the old king tried to kill him, but was prevented by Ammon, who was now forced to guard his own life from the enraged monarch. In the end, everything was made right, and the two kings went their own ways, Lamoni taking Ammon to Middoni.

Upon reaching this place they found Aaron and his brethren in prison, naked and bound. Now Aaron after separating from Ammon, had gone to Jerusalem and later to Ani-Anti, and from there to Middoni, but had accomplished no apparent good. At the second place he had fallen in with Muloki, and they with others had been made captives. Upon the arrival of Ammon and Lamoni, they were released. Then Ammon went back to the land of Ishmael with the king, while Aaron and his brethren went to the old king who had ill-treat-

ed Ammon and Lamoni. He received them gladly, because during all this time he had been thinking over some phrases that Ammon and Lamoni had dropped. He was converted in a similar manner to that of Lamoni and his queen. The people of his own district were also converted, and named Anti-Nephi-Lehi.

IV. The Anti-Nephi-Lehies.

We return now to the land of Ishmael. When Ammon went back there with the king, he took up the work of conversion where he left it. All the people, it seems, embraced the gospel; churches were built where the word of God might be preached. They took an oath to bury their weapons of war and never to use them again. "Our swords are bright now," they declared, "and we will never stain them again with blood." And they never did. When the unconverted Lamanites came to battle against them, they suffered the enemy to kill them as they would. In this manner more than a thousand were put to death, before the destroyers took pity. Of this very large army that had come out against Lamoni's people, more than enough were that day converted to make up for the loss of the slain. As for the rest, they went to seek vengeance of the Nephites who had put their brethren in this condition. The first city on their way was that of the followers of Nehor who had burned so many women and children in the presence of Alma and Amulek; and these the infuriated Lamanites, urged on by apostate Nephites, utterly and mercilessly put to death, destroying their very habitations.

The people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi were subsequently conducted by Ammon and his brethren to the territory of the Nephites, who welcomed them joyfully and set apart the land of Jershon for their home. Here they lived and flourished, never deviating from their allegiance to the truth, becoming industrious like the Nephites, and losing their skin of darkness. The Book of Mormon tells us that there were many thousand Lamanites converted by these zealous missionaries, and enumerates several cities that were wholly joined to the ranks of the Church. In all Ammon and his companions were gone fourteen years, returning in the fourteenth year of the reign of the judges.

LESSON XVIII.

MORONI: THE SOLDIER.

In the lessons we have thus far taken from the Book of Mormon we have had types of a Nephite King, a martyr-prophet, a high-priest-judge, and a missionary. But this does not exhaust the variety of character phases in this sacred book; for we are now to study the life of a soldier and general. Moroni, judged by the standard of the civilization under which he lived, was a great original genius, uniting at once the severe qualities of a patriot and warrior and the zeal and humanity of a religious leader. For invention and strategy in war, for energy and foresight, for the manipulation of forces in a telling manner, and for ability to make the most of an opportunity, Moroni is easily the first character in the Book of Mormon.

I. In the Zoramite War.

The first information we have of Moroni is when he was twenty-five years old. This was in the nineteenth year of the reign of the judges. He was then chosen chief captain of the Nephite armies which were about to be sent against the Zoramites. No doubt he had before this time manifested qualities of mind and heart that would justify bestowing upon him such a high honor and trust at such an age. But that the duties of this important office were discharged with such intelligence, energy, and justness as to have been the pride of his countrymen, we have ample evidence both in his actions and in the words of the sacred historian. "If all men had been, and were, and ever would be, like unto Moroni, the very powers of hell would have been shaken forever; the devil would never have power over the hearts of the children of men." This is no small praise.

You will doubtless remember that when Alma and his fellow missionaries withdrew from the Zoramites to the land of Jershon, those of the Zoramites who believed on their words were thrust out of the city, and were given protection by the people to whom the missionaries had gone. Now the inhabitants of Jershon were the Lamanites whom Ammon and his brethren had converted and who bore the name of Anti-Nephi-Lehi. You will also call to mind that the remaining Zoramites threatened to come against the city of Jershon unless the people whom they had expelled were driven out by the Ammonites. This of course was refused; and so the Zoramites proceeded to carry out their threat. As was the custom with dissenting Nephites when they wished to turn their hand against their brethren, these apostate people joined the Lamanites. Now, the Lamanites at this time were a motly class, composed not only of the followers of Laman, of Lemuel, and of Ishmael, but also of such dissenting Nephites as the Amalekites, the Zoramites, and the descendants of King Noah's priests. All these people, at the invitation of the Zoramites, gathered at the land of Antionum, where they were given captains and chief captains from the ranks of the apostate Nephites as being filled with more hatred and greater cunning, from which place they intended coming against the Nephites.

While this Lamanite army was making these arrangements, Moroni was busy collecting an army and otherwise preparing to meet the enemy. Moroni's army collected at the land of Jershon. When the Lamanites, under Zarahemnah, saw that the Nephites were prepared with shields and breast-plates, they were afraid to attack them; for they themselves were for the most part naked. So they took their journey towards the wilderness. Moroni, nothing daunted, requested Alma to inquire of the Lord as to where he should take his army in order best to defend his people. The Lord revealed to Alma that the Lamanites intended to go to the city of Manti for the purpose of taking it. Moroni, leaving part of his army at Jershon for its protection, marched hastily with the rest to Manti. Arrived near the river Sidon, he divided his forces into three parts, ar-

ranging them in such an ingenious manner as entirely to encompass the Lamanites when they came up. A fierce battle followed, in which Moroni was in the end victorious. At one stage of the fighting when the Nephite commander saw the consternation of the enemy, he ordered his men to cease. This having been done, Moroni offered terms of peace to Zarahemnah, providing he and his army would give up their arms and take an oath never to come up against the Nephites to battle again. The Lamanite captain said he would give up his arms, but refused to take the oath. But Moroni would not accept such terms, and commanded his army to fall upon the Lamanites again; and there was terrible slaughter on both sides. When Zarahemnah saw his men struck down at a terrible rate, he accepted the original terms of Moroni, and departed with the rest of his army.

This instance is one of the most remarkable recorded in the Book of Mormon, because of this act of humanity on the part of Moroni in offering to give peace to an enemy whom he had in his power and whom he could completely destroy if he chose. And it is all the more remarkable when we think of the age of the world in which it happened—an age, in fact, when such thoughts never entered the minds of successful European generals The first instance, if we are correctly informed, when such a thing occurred in nations other than the Nephite, was when General Grant told the defeated Southern army to take their arms and supplies and use them to a better purpose on their farms—an act that astonished the civilized world.

II. The Episode of Amalickiah.

Shortly after this, the most cunning, ambitious, and unscrupulous man of whom the Book of Mormon gives an account, arose and attempted to become king of the nation. He had such a large following as to place the liberties of the people as a whole in a "precarious and dangerous" condition for a time. But this man had a complete match in Moroni, as the sequel will show. Putting on his armor and renting his coat, tying a piece of it on the end of a pole, Moroni went through

the streets crying out for all who loved their liberties and their God to follow him. In this way he not only found out who were on the other side but obtained such a large army of bold warriors as would not be likely to submit to defeat. Thus affairs stood for a while.

When Amalickiah saw that the conservative element was the stronger, he feared to risk a battle. So he stealthily made his way, with his army, towards the wilderness, thinking to enlist the sympathies of the Lamanites. But Moroni was too shrewd and active for him. Moroni took an army and headed off the discontented Amalickiahites, turned most of them back with their faces towards their former homes, and compelled them to enter into a covenant of peace.

But the tricky Amalickiah had escaped with a small number of men. And here follows a series of successes in the gratification of a most wicked ambition in this meteoric career. He made his way to the king of the Lamanites, secured his word to aid him in obtaining supreme governorship of the Nephites, and actually set to work himself, on the authority of the king, to collect an army. But the Lamanites for some reason refused to do anything; very likely those who had taken an oath of Moroni not to war again with the Nephites. At any rate, they fled to a place called Onidah, where the Lamanite arms were kept and where they selected a leader and prepared to defend themselves. The king put Amalickiah at the head of his own army and told him to compel the rest into submission. When this wicked Nephite reached Onidah, he asked the opposing leader for a private conference, which, after numerous refusals, was finally granted. There and then Amalickiah proposed that next morning before daylight this refractory army surround his and make them prisoners, on the condition, however, that Amalickiah should be made second commander. Everything happened next morning as arranged, and the Nephite was made second in command of the combined forces.

His next step was to have Lehonti, the head general, poisoned; then he was made the chief commander. Marching back to the city he was met by the king and his principal attendants. But Amalickiah's ambitions were not yet satisfied.

He meditated becoming king of the Lamanites. So he sent some of his servants to meet the king, with instructions for them to kill him at a convenient opportunity. This of course they soon found; the king was stabbed; and his servants fled in terror. Affecting to be greatly shocked at this perfidious deed, Amalickiah ordered a small force to follow these fleeing servants, whom he charged with the murder: they were not caught, however, but later succeeded in reaching the land of Jershon. With the proper attitude of grief, this ambitious commander next went to the queen, whom he soon convinced that the king had been murdered by his own attendants, and whom he married, thus becoming the chief ruler of all the Lamanites.

Having gone so high by his cunning and wickedness, he now sought to become governor of all the land, over Nephites as well as Lamanites. With this purpose in view he engaged men to harangue the people from the towers, to excite their evil passions by bringing up all the supposed wrongs that the Lamanites had endured at the hands of their more prosperous brethren, the Nephites. By such means he collected an innumerable host, and armed and officered them for a mighty conflict with the greatest commander ever known among the Nephites.

LESSON XIX.

MORONI: THE SOLDIER (Continued.)

Moroni was sufficiently versed in the history of apostates in general, and with the conduct of the ambitious Amalickiah in particular, to know that he would come back with as large a force as he could collect, and attempt to overturn the government of the Nephites. So Moroni made preparations according to the greatness of the danger.

He gathered a large force and armed them in the most effectual manner known to him. At this time the Nephite warriors wore breast-plates and shields, so that the vital parts of their bodies were protected. Their principal weapons were the sword, the spear, and the cimeter. The labors of the peaceful Ammonites—those converts who had taken an oath never to stain their swords again—were utilized in furnishing provisions for the armies. The chief names that we meet with in connection with the leadership are Moroni, Lehi, and Teancum, all of whom were skillful and full of resources.

But the most important part of these elaborate preparations on the part of Moroni, and altogether the most original and effective, consisted in fortifying the principal cities exposed to the attacks of the enemy. Fortifications appear to have been something new till now in the history of Nephite warfare. Deep trenches were dug, the earth being heaped up on the inside to a great height. In some instances the top was built up of wood-work, in order both to decrease the liability of the enemy's climbing over the walls and to facilitate attacks on the part of those within. Towers, too, overlooking the surrounding country were erected at safe distances from the enemy's arrows and spears. In addition cities were established on the east and north of the inhabited country in places where the Lamanite armies would be likely to come. Nothing was left undone that might contribute to the defense of the people.

IV. The War Opens.

Towards the latter part of the year nineteen a large army of Lamanites came towards the land of Ammonihah. This was the place, you remember, that was destroyed by the Lamanites, but it had been partly rebuilt and fortified by Moroni. Great was the astonishment of the Lamanite army when they saw the breast-work that protected the city, for they had never seen the like of this before, and knew not how to cope with this new condition. Without striking a blow, therefore, they left for the city of Noah, vowing rashly on the way that they would take it. But when they reached this place, they found it to be fortified more strongly than Ammonihah. Moroni had been shrewd enough to foresee this conduct on the part of the enemy. But on account of their foolish vow, they decided to make an attack, let the end be as it might. They were, of course, entirely unsuccessful, finally retreating with the loss of more than a thousand men, while the Nephites had not lost a single man.

When the defeated army returned to tell Amalickiah their fate, for the king did not come up with his army, he "cursed God and Moroni," swearing that before the war was over he would drink Moroni's blood. We shall see how he succeeded.

For several years there was peace, partly on account of the preparations going on in both countries for the impending contest. Unfortunately, however, there were dissensions among the Nephites, which we must say something about. One of these grew out of a dispute between two cities over the boundary line. One city resorted to arms and would have done mischief but for the timely interference of Moroni. Another was more serious, though no arms were raised by either party. The "high-born" among the people wished for a king, the rest were for the prevailing order. The former were called king-men, the latter free-men. The rupture grew so serious that when news came of Amalickiah's approach with a great army, these king-men were not only pleased, but they actually refused to take up arms in defense of their country. They would have joined the forces of the enemy had they not been prevented by Moroni, who thought the Lamanite army already

too strong. Four thousand of them were therefore summarily put to death, and the rest, fearing a similar fate, took the oath of allegiance. Thus was this rebellion put down.

V. The Great Conflict.

Moroni now turned his energy against the man who had sworn to drink his blood. Amalickiah was already at the city of Moroni, with an army, which, looking only at their numbers, would have frightened the Nephites into submission had they not been fired by a righteous cause. There is not sufficient space here to enter into the details of this long and fierce struggle. We shall only call up those that serve to bring out the character of Moroni.

The war had got pretty well along. Several cities with their population of men, women, and children, had fallen into the hands of the Lamanites. Amalikiah had been slain by the secret hand of the brave Teancum, and Ammoron, his brother, had succeeded to the kingdom. A Lamanite captain by the name of Jacob, with his forces, was holding the city of Mulek, and Moroni wished to recapture it. So he sent Teancum with a small force to decoy Jacob out of the city, stationing Lehi with his army in front and himself with another army in the rear of the city. The unwary Lamanites caught the bait and sallied out after Teancum, who of course retreated in the direction of Lehi. After a long and fruitless march, Jacob and his men, worn out, were returning with Lehi hot at their heels, when they met Moroni's forces. With fresh troops in front and in the rear, the poor Lamanites were in a bad state. Nevertheless, they gave battle in a vigorous manner, but after many had fallen on both sides, they were compelled to surrender. All who were taken captive in this battle were sent with others, to Bountiful, and there made to fortify the city till it became one of the strongest places in the land. All the prisoners taken in this war were kept here.

On another occasion he wished to take the city of Gid where the captive Nephites were retained. Before this Ammoron had sent Moroni an offer to exchange prisoners; but

Moroni would not do so unless Ammoron would give up a man and his family for each Lamanite. But this the Lamanite king would not do. So Moroni determined to release his people without giving up any prisoners. Finding a converted Lamanite whose name was Laman, he sent him with some strong wine to the guards of this city of Gid. Laman succeeded in getting the guards drunk. Then Moroni threw into the city plenty of weapons to arm the captives, even the women and the older children. It was an easy matter in the morning to capture those Lamanites who guarded the city. Thus Moroni's own army was strengthened and the opposing forces weakened.

With Lehi in one place, Teancum in another, Helaman with his two thousand "sons" in still another, and other good captains elsewhere, Moroni going wherever he was needed most, the Nephites ultimately regained the cities that had fallen, and finally drove the Lamanite forces out of the land.

VI. Heleman's Army of Young Men.

Those Lamanites whom Ammon and his brethren converted and who now occupied the land of Jershon, so often spoken of here, felt very badly when they saw their brethren the Nephites fighting so hard for their liberties and they unable, on account of their oaths, to lift a hand in so noble an undertaking. Once they were about to break their oaths and take up the sword, but the Nephites would not let them do so. Now, they had two thousand young men among them who had not taken an oath not to shed blood and who were old enough to wield the sword. So they organized and chose Helaman to be their captain. The campaign of this little army under their prophet leader is exceedingly interesting as related by Helaman himself in chapters 56-58 of the book of Alma.

Once this small band of youthful warriors was sent past the city of Antiparah, which was in possession of a large force of the enemy, in the hopes of decoying them out to battle. In the event of their being pursued, it was the intention that Antipus with his army should fall on the rear of the Laman-

ite forces. The Lamanites, sure enough, as soon as they espied this little army, ran out to attack them; but the Ammonite boys led them a pretty chase for three days, with Antipus not a great way behind them. At last they stopped, and Helaman asked his "sons" whether they should go back and fight, for it might be that Antipus was attacking the Lamanites on the opposite side. "God is with us," said these brave young men, "and he will not suffer us to fall into the hands of the Lamanites." So they went back and engaged in one of the most bloody battles recorded during this war. Antipus had been killed, and his army was on the point of retreating when the two thousand young men came up and saved the day.

On this and other occasions they were severely wounded. In fact there was not one who in the end did not bear a great many wounds. But their indomitable faith in God, kept them alive, and at the conclusion of the campaign not one had been killed, though hundreds had fallen all around them.

VII. Death of Moroni.

In order properly to weigh the tremendous responsibility devolving upon Moroni during this war, and therefore rightly to estimate his really great powers, we must remember that the Lamanites were all through the campaign far more numerous than the Nephites, that they therefore were able to attack more places at wide distances apart, and that Moroni had to contend with internal dissension in the midst of the greatest stress. Yet he was able by his tireless energy and fine executive ability to bring the war to a successful termination for the cause of liberty and the Church, and to drive the Lamanites from every stronghold they had captured and ultimately from the land. In all this he was ably seconded by some brave captains; but the moving force of everything pertaining to the war was Moroni.

He died in the year thirty-six, when he was only forty-two years old. His office of commander fell upon his son Moronihah, who inherited also some of the executive qualities of his great father.

LESSON XX.

MORMON AND MORONI.

In this lesson we are to speak of the last of the Nephites, of those melancholy days in the history of the white inhabitants of ancient America when the whole population took sides in a dreadful and protracted war of extermination, and when the solitary figure of Moroni was the only reminder of the higher life of the Nephite race.

I. From Helaman to Mormon.

But we must first say something of the period lying between the time when our last lesson closed and the time when this one opens. Moroni the Nephite commander died as we have seen, in the year thirty-six of the reign of the judges, or fifty-five years before Christ, and Mormon was born in the year 311 A. D., leaving more than three hundred and fifty years to be bridged over by this section of the lesson. But there are two distinct divisions under which we may group the facts that are necessay for us to know in order to understand the lives of Mormon and Moroni.

The first period covers from the year 55 B. C. to the year 33 A. D., eighty-eight years. Generally speaking it was a time of wickedness on the part of the Nephites, though there were periods when the Church was prosperous; and of righteousness on the part of Lamanites, for most of them were converted by the teachings of Lehi and Nephi about thirty years before Christ. Many of the Nephites went up through the "narrow neck of land" to the southern part of North America, where they established cities and dwelt in them. Bands of robbers, called after their first leader Gadianton, infested the land, creating a precarious state of government for the more peaceful inhabitants. These Gadianton robbers did more than any other one thing finally to overturn society and order

among the Nephites, and at last to annihilate the race. In the midst of all these things, however, numerous prophets arose to warn the people and turn them to Christ. One of the most noted of these was Samuel, a Lamanite, who prophesied just before the birth of our Savior. When this great event happened among the Jews in Palestine, great lights were seen by the inhabitants of America and there were two days and a night as if it were one day, for there was no darkness. This had been the sign given by the Lamanite prophet. Once after this, the people became wicked again, but were finally brought back to the truth after the Crucifixion. This brings us to the year 33 A. D.

Then Christ appeared to the Nephites, taught them the same things that he did the Jews, performed miracles among them, organized the Church with the same officers in it, and instituted the same laws and ordinances as he had on the other continent. This period may be passed over hastily because it was one of continuous righteousness on the part of Nephites and Lamanites. For four generations there were no wars or dissensions, no Lamanites and Nephites, for the people had all become the children of Christ.

II. The Days of Mormon.

And so we come to the last of the three periods, which for wickedness, Mormon says, was unparalleled in the entire history of the Nephites. And to all this he was a witness. The people divided, and the words Nephite and Lamanite were revived; the Gadianton robbers again sprang up and committed depredations; there was a general apostasy from the Church, and no prophet was permitted to reprove the people for their sins; violence and bloodshed overspread the entire country.

Mormon tells us that in his day "the whole face of the land was covered with buildings, and the people were as numerous, almost, as the sand of the sea." The southern part of North America as well as much of South America, was occupied.

Battle after battle succeeded between these two races,

victory being now with one now with the other, but thousands perishing on both sides in each onset. Once Mormon absolutely refused to lead his people against the Lamanites, but towards the end he again assumed command. He wrote to the king of the Lamanites asking for permission to assemble his armies in the neighborhood of the Hill Cumorah, which, as you know, is in what is now called New York State, and there he would meet them for the final struggle. This request was granted, and Mormon gathered his forces. Mormon names eighteen men each of whom had ten thousand under his command, and there were probably others. On the Lamanite side there must have been a still greater number, making in all several hundred thousand men engaged in this place for a battle to the death. Fighting continued until the vast armies of the Nephites had been hewn down like grass before the scythe, leaving only twenty-four of which number were Mormon and Moroni. Thus perished the white population of America.

Mormon and Moroni were the only men of that dreadful period who retained in their hearts any regard for God and religion. Mormon tells us that when he was ten years old Ammaron said to him: "I perceive that thou art a sober child, and art quick to observe; therefore when thou art about twenty and four years old, I would that thou shouldst remember the things that thou hast observed concerning this people; and when thou art of age, go to the land Antum, unto a hill, which shall be called Shim; and there have I deposited unto the Lord, all the sacred engravings concerning this people." This Mormon did, writing on one set of plates an elaborate account of what he had seen, and on another an abridged form, which we have in the first seven chapters of his book. This good man has left on record an account of the sadness he experienced when he saw his people fading away before the Lamanites like dew before the morning sun, knowing as he did that all this was due to their extreme wickedness.

"O ye fair sons and daughters," he exclaims, "ye fathers and mothers, ye husbands and wives, ye fair ones, how is it that ye would have fallen! Behold, ye are gone, and my sorrows cannot bring your return."

III. A Brief Account of Moroni.

Moroni took charge of the records which his father gave him, namely, the records substantially as we have them in the Book of Mormon today. His father, he says, was killed by the Lamanites, and the rest of the Nephites were hunted until they too were put to death. "Whether they will slay me," he declares with pathetic calmness, "I know not. I am alone; my father hath been slain in battle, and all my kinsfolks, and I have not friends nor whither to go; and how long the Lord will suffer that I may live, I know not."

After finishing the sacred record he buried it in the hill Cumorah, where it was shown the Prophet Joseph Smith on the twenty-second of September, 1823.

Whether Moroni died a natural death after finishing his work, or whether in his solitary wanderings over the country made desolate by the ravages of war, he fell a prey to the arrow of the Lamanites or the dagger of the Gadianton robbers, we are not informed. But the lonely figure of the Last of the Nephites in its efforts to avoid the quick eye of the Redman of the forest, will always impress our minds as being extremely pathetic and dramatic.

The Prophet Joseph tells us that Moroni was raised from the dead, and thus it was that he appeared in these days as an angel. Here he appears as the angel of the records which he had deposited in Cumorah just fourteen hundred years before his first appearance to the Prophet.

References and Review Questions.

At the expense of repeating what has been said in several preceding Manuals, we make a few suggestions concerning the matter of questions. In connection with each lesson, there are review and research questions. In those questions that involve thought as opposed to mere information, it would be well to make assignments for the coming week. The teacher should have his material so well in hand, that questions in great detail will arise in his mind as he proceeds with the recitation.

It would be well if the teacher were to have the students read the general research questions pertaining to the Book of Mormon before any of the lessons are studied, in order that they may be kept in mind as the year's work progresses, and then at the end of the class, they should be taken up for discussion.

It is presumed that the class teacher is already familiar with the subject matter of this Manual; but in order to achieve the best results, it is necessary to bring to the class not only a full, but a fresh knowledge of each lesson.

In addition to the few references to the Old Testament here given, much information of an interesting character may be obtained by consulting any of the following works: "Hours with the Bible," Geikie; "Evenings with the Bible," Errett; "Jewish Heroes and Prophets," John Lord; "The Great Men of God," W. F. P. Noble.

All teachers should have access to the "Dictionary of the Bible," edited by Dr. Wm. Smith; "The Bible Atlas," by Rand and McNally, and "Josephus' Works."

LESSON I.

ELIJAH.

References:

I Kings, Chapters 12-22.
II Kings, Chapters 1-2.
Doc. & Cov., Section 110: 12-16.
Compendium, Page 182.

Questions:

1. Who exerted the greatest influence towards the establishment of the Kingdom of Israel?

2. What took place among the Israelites after the death of Solomon?

3. Which tribes formed the Kingdom of Israel?

4. Which tribes formed the Kingdom of Judah?

5. What were the religious conditions of the Kingdom of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam?

6. In what respect was Jezebel's influence so injurious to the Kingdom of Israel?

7. What great prophet appeared during the reign of Ahab?

8. What kind of life did this prophet live?

9. What was his first message to King Ahab?

10. How was Elijah cared for during the time that he was in hiding?

11. Show that Elijah's prophecy concerning the absence of rain, was fulfilled?

12. Relate Elijah's experiences in Zarephath?

13. What saved the widow and her son from starvation?

14. What was Elijah's reply to Ahab when that king asked if he was the one who troubled Israel?

15. How did Elijah prove to the people the folly of worshiping Baal?

16. Relate the circumstances connected with this test?

17. What was the result of this test?

18. Show from this lesson the result of faith in God.

19. What was the religious condition of the people among whom Elijah labored?

20. Wherein did Elijah exhibit great courage?

LESSON II.

ELIJAH. (Continued).

References:

Same as preceding lesson.

Questions:

1. Prove that God honors his prophets.
2. How was the famine removed from the land?
3. Why was Elijah compelled to leave the city of Jezreel?
4. Where did he go?
5. Who cared for this prophet when he was banished to the wilderness?
6. How was he sheltered in the wilderness?
7. What were the conditions under which the Lord appeared to him?
8. What was Elijah's answer to the "Still Small Voice?"
9. From this answer what may we infer concerning the conditions among the people of Israel?
10. Whom did Elijah call on when journeying to Damascus?
11. Why was Naboth put to death?
12. Who was responsible for the murder of Naboth?
13. What took place when the king and his gardeners went to Naboth's vineyard?
14. What did Elijah say should befall Ahab and his family for their wickedness?
15. Show its fulfilment."
16. Who was Ahijah?
17. Why did he send messengers to the priests of Baal?
18. What were Elijah's words to these priests?
19. Give an account of Elijah's arrest.

20. What was the last miracle that Elijah performed?

21. Who accompanied him on his last journey?

22. What promise did Elijah make to Elisha?

23. What became of Elijah?

24. Give an account of his visit to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

25. What important keys were committed to Joseph Smith by this prophet?

LESSON III.

ELISHA.

References:

II Kings, Chapters 2-6.

Questions:

1. Give an account of Elisha's call to labor as a prophet.

2. What was Elisha's business?

3. Where did he live?

4. What was his financial condition?

5. Compare the dispositions and character of Elijah and Elisha.

6. In what respect are they alike?

7. What evidence have we that Elisha's desire for a double portion of the spirit of his master was granted?

8. What was the first miracle he performed?

9. What reason have we for believing that Elisha's friend doubted his account of Elijah's disappearance?

10. How were the waters of Jericho made sweet?

11. What lesson have we here showing the result of irreverence?

12. Relate the circumstance in which the widow was able to pay her debts and provide for her family.

13. What were the results of obedience to the prophet's word in this case?

14. Give an account of Elisha's early acquaintance with the woman of Shunem?

15. Give two prominent circumstances showing the results of her kindness to the prophet Elisha.

16. Relate the account of the death of this woman's son and his restoration to life.

17. What miracle did Elisha perform in Gilgal?

LESSON IV.

ELISHA. (Continued).

References:

Same as lesson III.

Questions:

1. Who was Naaman?
2. What was the disease with which he was afflicted?
3. How did he learn of the prophet Elisha?
4. Why did he make a visit to Samaria?
5. What was his manner of traveling?
6. Why did he take with him rich presents?
7. What did the prophet Elisha tell Naaman to do?
8. How did Naaman receive this instruction?
9. What was the result of his final obedience to Elisha's words?
10. What important lesson is taught in this circumstance?
11. Why were the Syrians anxious to capture Elisha?
12. By what means did Elisha miraculously lead the Syrians into the center of the city of their enemies?
13. After Elisha saw how helpless they were how did he treat them?
14. Give an account of Elisha's death.

LESSON V.

ISAIAH.

References:

II Kings, Chapter 19.
Book of Isaiah.

Questions:

1. Who was reigning in Jerusalem when Isaiah made his public appearance as a prophet?

2. What was the financial condition of the people during the reign of Jotham?

3. Why did Ahaz form an alliance with the king of Assyria?

4. How did the prophet Isaiah regard this alliance?

5. Show the wisdom of Isaiah's position in this matter.

6. Who was Hezekiah?

7. What political movement during the early part of his reign was opposed by Isaiah?

8. What was the result of disobedience to Isaiah's counsel in this case?

9. Give the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy concerning the Assyrian army.

10. What effect did the destruction of this army have?

11. When Hezekiah was sick, what was Isaiah's statement to him?

12. What did Hezekiah do after hearing the words of Isaiah?

13. What was the character of Hezekiah?

14. What did the Lord direct Isaiah to say to Hezekiah?

15. Who visited Hezekiah soon after his recovery?

16. Show that these messengers were deceitful.

17. What mistake did Hezekiah make?

18. What did Isaiah say to him concerning this?

19. What other prophets lived at the same time that Isaiah did?

20. What reason have we for saying that Isaiah was a historian?

21. What can you say regarding his style of writing?

22. What great events did he prophecy concerning?

23. Show the fulfillment of the prophecy contained in Isaiah, Chap. 29.

24. Give some evidence that Isaiah was a true prophet.

LESSON VI.

DANIEL.

Reference:

Book of Daniel.

Questions:

1. Where was Daniel born?

2. To what nation did he belong?

3. What was the condition in Jerusalem during Zedekiah's reign?

4. Who captured Jerusalem about this time?

5. What is the result when the wicked reign?

6. Name four boys who were taken to Babylon.

7. What were the characteristics of those chosen by Nebuchadnezzar to become officers in his kingdom?

8. How were they trained?

9. What reason have we for believing that Daniel was distinguished for his physical beauty, as well as for his intelligence?

10. How did those who ruled over Daniel and his friends regard them?

11. What kind of food were they to have?

12. Why did Daniel and his three companions prefer the plain food which they asked for?

13. What effect did this plain food have on them?

14. Prove from this, the result of plain, wholesome living.

15. What has the Lord revealed through Joseph Smith on the subject of food?

16. Show the inconsistency of Nebuchadnezzar in demanding the interpretation of his first dream.

17. How did Daniel obtain the king's dream and its interpretation?

18. What effect did this have on the Hebrew children?

19. Relate the dream.

20. What is the meaning of Daniel 2:44?

21. How did the king reward Daniel?

22. Show that Daniel was a generous and upright young man.

LESSON VII.

DANIEL. (Continued).

Reference:

Book of Daniel.

Questions:

1. How did Daniel save the Magicians from destruction?

2. What was the reason that Daniel rose to such a high position in the kingdom?

3. Why were the three Hebrew children cast into the fiery furnace?

4. What effect did their deliverance from this fire have upon the king?

5. What inspired these men with courage to endure this ordeal?

6. Give the account of this ordeal.

7. Who succeeded Nebuchadnezzar as king of Babylonia?

8. What happened while the king and his companions were feasting in the palace?

9. Give the words that were written on the wall.

10. What was Daniel's interpretation of these words?

11. Show the fulfillment of Daniel's interpretation of the words written upon the wall.

12. How was Daniel treated by Darius?

13. What plot was laid for the destruction of Daniel?

14. Prove from this circumstance that Daniel was a man of very great courage and faith.

15. Relate the account of Daniel's being cast in the lion's den.

16. What effect did the preservation of Daniel from the savage beasts have upon the king?

17. What was the substance of the decree issued by Darius?

18. Prove from this lesson that the attempts of evil men to overthrow the work of the Lord, resulted in its advancement. advancement.

LESSON VIII.

JEREMIAH.

Reference:

Jeremiah.

Questions:

1. What was Jeremiah's sadness due to in part at least?

2. What was his disposition?

3. Who was reigning in Judah when Jeremiah began his ministry?

4. What was the attitude of this noble king toward idolatry?

5. What discovery was made during the repairing of the temple?

6. Give a brief account of Josiah, King of Judah.

7. What took place in Jerusalem just prior to the reign of Zedekiah?

8. What were the respective policies of the two political parties in Jerusalem?

9. To which party did Jeremiah belong?

10. What means did Jeremiah use to impress his protest?

11. Give the substance of his message?

12. How did Jeremiah show that the source of his inspiration was much greater than that possessed by the false prophets?

13. Give an account of the siege of Jerusalem.

14. In what year was Jerusalem taken by the Babylonians?

15. About this time what company escaped from Jerusalem and came to America?

16. How was Jeremiah treated during the siege?

17. Show that Jeremiah was respected by those who captured Jerusalem.

18. Give an account of his last days.

19. Name one other prophet who lived in Jerusalem at this time.

20. Show how remarkably the prophecies of these men were fulfilled.

LESSON IX.

ESTHER AND MORDECAI.

Reference:

Book of Esther.

Questions:

1. Who was Ahasuerus?
2. What was the character of this king?
3. Give an account of the feast that was held in Susa.
4. Why was Vashti discrowned?
5. Give the account of Esther's being chosen as queen.
6. Who was Haman?
7. What reason have we for believing that Haman was a vain and wicked man?
8. What was Haman's purpose in offering to pay into the public treasury $12,500,000?
9. What was behind Haman's proposal?
10. How did the Jews receive this decree?

11. Who was Mordecai?

12. How did Esther learn of this cruel scheme to kill her people?

13. Why was the Queen careful about speaking to the King concerning this edict?

14. Give three arguments in Mordecai's answer to Esther's explanation.

15. Wherein did Esther exhibit great courage?

16. How was Esther's intrusion upon the King's presence received by him?

17. Show her tact and wisdom in making known to the king her petition.

18. What effect did the invitation to attend the queen's banquet have upon Haman?

19. What was the weakest place in Haman's character?

20. Compare the character of Haman and Mordecai.

LESSON X.

ESTHER AND MORDECAI. (Continued.)

Reference:

Same as preceding lesson.

Questions:

1. Show that Mordecai was a true friend to the king?

2. Relate the account of how the king was reminded of Mordecai's favor.

3. Who was the first to visit the King on the following morning?

4. What question did the King put to Haman?

5. From Haman's answer, what may you conclude concerning his character?

6. How did the king show his gratitude to Mordecai?

7. What effect did the honor shown Mordecai have upon Haman?

8. What answer did Esther give when asked by the King to make known her request?

9. What effect did the statement of the facts in this case have upon the King?

10. Show that Haman was a coward.

11. What is your opinion of Haman?

12. Show the peculiar fitness of Haman's death.

13. Give an estimate of the character of Mordecai.

14. How was Haman's cruel decree overcome?

15. What was the final effect upon the Jews of this decree?

LESSON XI.

JOB.

Reference:

Book of Job.

Questions:

1. Of what does the main body of the Book of Job consist?

2. In what respects was Job blessed?

3. What did the Lord say concerning Job?

4. Relate in their order the calamities which befell him.

5. What did Job say after receiving all of these calamities?

6. What reason have we for believing that Job loved his children tenderly?

7. What did Satan say was the reason Job served the Lord?

8. With what spirit did Job endure all of these trials?

9. How was Job afflicted in his body?

10. Who visited Job during this affliction?

11. What effect did Job's suffering have upon them?

12. Show from Job's utterances that he was in sore distress.

13. What did these three friends say was the reason that Job was thus afflicted?

14. These three men argued that only the wicked suffer. Is that true?

15. Repeat Job 19:23-27.

16. What new argument does Elihu present?

17. Give the questions which the Lord put to Job.

18. Finally, how was Job blessed?

19. Did Job appreciate the last blessings conferred upon him as much as those he enjoyed before? Give reasons for your answer.

20. What expression used by Job proves that he possessed great faith?

21. Have you read the Book of Job?

22. What, to your mind, is the great lesson taught in this book?

23. What is your estimate of the character of Job?

LESSON XII.

EZEKIEL, EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.

References:

Book of Ezekiel.
Book of Ezra.
Book of Nehemiah.

Questions:

1. Where did Ezekiel receive his first message from the Lord?

2. Explain how he happened to be in Babylonia.

3. What reference is made to his domestic life?

4. How was he esteemed by his companions?

5. What reason have we for believing that he was a close student of the Scriptures?

6. In what respect was his position unique among the prophets?

7. How long did he labor as a missionary?

8. Give an account of his death.

9. In the main, how many companies returned from Babylon to Jerusalem?

10. Give an account of the company conducted by Zerubbabel.

11. How many were there in this company?

12. What did they take with them to Jerusalem?

13. What important work did they accomplish there?

14. Who conducted the second company to Jerusalem?

15. From the account given, what may we justly conclude concerning the character of Ezra?

16. What was the object of his returning to Jerusalem?

17. Why was he eminently fitted for the task which he undertook?

18. In what important respect had many of the Jews in Jerusalem violated the law of Moses?

19. How was the law of Moses expounded?

20. Who was Nehemiah?

21. Why was the position of cup-bearer an important one?

22. What was the condition of the Jews in Jerusalem at this time?

23. How did this affect Nehemiah?

24. Wherein was the King very kind to Nehemiah?

25. When did Nehemiah reach Jerusalem?

26. Under what circumstances did he inspect the city and its surroundings?

27. Relate the circumstances under which the walls were finished and the gates replaced.

28. What important reformation did Nehemiah bring about in Jerusalem?

29. What particular thing proves that Jeremiah was a good generous man?

30. What is your estimate of this prophet?

31. Have you read the Book of Ezra?

LESSON XIII.

KING BENJAMIN.

References:

Omni 1:23-25; Words of Mormon 1:12-18; Mosiah Chapters 1-5.

Review Questions:

1. What two peoples occupied America at this time? Where did they come from? Who led them. When did the division occur? What led them to choose the names they bore? What differences existed between them (two)? State what you know of the records kept by one of these peoples. Tell of their wars, prosperity, prophets. What did they know of Christ? How came they to know all this?

2. Who was Benjamin? What condition prevailed when he first became King? Tell of his powers in war? How about Benjamin in other respects. What example did he set to other rulers after him?

3. Why did he call his people together (two reasons)? Who sent out word? What tribute did Benjamin pay his people when he issued instructions for them to assemble? How were they arranged when they reached Zarahemla? Why was a tower built?

4. What does Benjamin think of "being in the service of our fellowmen?" The greater part of his discourse was about what? When did all this happen? What was the effect of this part the discourse on the people? What did they do afterwards? What name did Benjamin give them in consequence? Who succeeded Benjamin as king?

Questions to Think About:

1. Think over the qualities that a ruler of any people ought to have. How many of these did Benjamin have? What one thing strikes you most in this lesson? What do you think of Benjamin's words about "being in the service of God?" Read the short poem entitled "Abou Ben Adhem," by Leigh Hunt.

2. Read chapters two and three of Mosiah and then

make a careful outline of Benjamin's discourse, pointing out, that is, what he says first, what next, and so on.

3. Read again what the lesson says about the Nephites and the Lamanites, and then ask yourself what made this difference in their condition. Do you see this difference between men? Why?

4. Write a short description of our present Indians. Or, describe some one Indian you have seen.

LESSON XIV.

ABINADI.

References:

Mosiah, Chapters 7-25.

Review Questions:

1. Where did the events narrated in the previous lesson occur? Where the events in this? Where are these two places supposed to have been?

2. Where most probably was the first home of Lehi's colony in America? Where did they go from here? Why did they leave this second place? Where did they go? Who was king when this move occurred? Whom did they find in this place? Who were these people? What was their condition? Why?

3. Why did Zeniff wish to go back to Nephi? Why did the Lamanite king give them permission to reoccupy the land, so readily? How long did the Zeniffites remain here before the first war? Tell of this war.

4. Who succeeded Zeniff as king? What kind of man was he? Describe the general condition under his reign.

5. What was the burden of Abinadi's message to these people? What did the king do when he heard of this prophet? Then what did Abinadi do? Describe the scene before the king. What was the principal part of Abinadi's words about? Why? What was finally done with Abinadi?

6. Give as many as possible of the points in Abinadi's predictions concerning these people. How were they fulfilled? Tell of Alma and his work. Of Gideon? Of what finally became of this colony.

Questions to Think About:

1. Why does a righteous king generally have a good people, and a wicked king a wicked people? If this is too hard, why is the conduct of a crowd of young men a good deal like that of their leader?

2. What one word would you use to describe the characteristics of mind that led Abinadi to act as he did when he knew what the consequences might be? Relate an instance you have heard of where men or women have exhibited similar traits. Can you think of some positions in the career of a young man in the ordinary walks of life where the same qualities of mind and heart are needed?

3. Do you see any reason why the people uder Zeniff should succeed, and the people under Noah should fail, in their battles with the Lamanites? Watch your own conduct for the next week to see when you feel strong and when weak in your actions, and why.

LESSON XV.

ALMA THE YOUNGER.

References:

Mosiah, chapters 26, 27; Alma, chapters 1-16, 30-43, and chapter 45.

Review Questions:

1. What kind of young man was Alma, before his conversion? Name some of his qualities of mind. Who were with him in his work? What was the effect of the conduct of these young men on their fathers? Describe the conversion. What, particularly, happened to Alma? What did he say after he recovered? What effect had this on the people?

2. What change occurred at this time in the Nephite government? What two reasons did Mosiah have for making this change? Which do you think the stronger reason? Name some of the officers under this new order. What offices did Alma occupy?

3. Who was Amlici? What did he do that we consider him here? What was the result to him of his conduct? Was he sincere?

Questions to Think About:

1. Do you think Alma was sincere in his opposition to the Church? Why? What difference would it make whether he was sincere or not? Do you think any one is justified in opposing what he does not believe? Why?.

2. What is skepticism? State what is said of skepticism in this lesson. Why do you think this is the case? Look at the actions of your companions and see whether this applies to them in a small way.

LESSON XVI.

ALMA THE YOUNGER. (Continued.)

References:

Same as in Lesson XV.

Review Questions:

1. What did Alma do in the year named? Why? What place did he go to that we consider in this lesson? What was his reception here? How did he feel about it? What happened next?

2. Tell the circumstances of Alma meeting Amulek Why did Amulek receive Alma? What were they told to say to the people?

3. What kind of man is Zeesrom said to have been? Name one thing he said to Amulek. What did Amulek say

in answer? What was the outcome so far as Zeesrom was concerned? And others?

4. What did the people do with Alma and Amulek? What with others? How did some of the judges, lawyers, and priests act towards the prophets?

5. How did the imprisonment of these men end? What afterwards became of the city and people?

6. Who was Korihor? What was he doing that was not right? How did he act when arrested and brought before the authorities? What did he want Alma to do? What reason did Alma give for the punishment of this man? What was Korihor's end?

7. Who were the Zoramites do you think? Describe their manner of worship. What did Alma and the other missionaries tell those who were excluded from this worship? Where did these men go when they had finished? What success did they meet?

8. What was the next thing done by the Zoramites? What purpose had they in mind? What were their threats to the people of Ammon?

Questions to Think About.

1. Compare Alma's conduct before his conversion with Korihor's, (1) in their intentions, (2) in the effect of the heavenly manifestation to them, and (3) in the subsequent lives of the two men. What about Zeesrom, in these respects?

2. What do you think of the fitness of Korihor's punishment?

3. What do you think of Zeesrom's offering money to Amulek for denying God? What do you see back of this act so far as Zeesrom is concerned?

4. Why did Alma not stop the burning of these innocent people at the request of Amulek, seeing that he possessed so much of the power of the Lord? Why should people have their free agency to do right or wrong? What does the lesson say with respect to religious freedom among the Nephites? Read "Corianton," by B. H. Roberts.

LESSON XVII.

AMMON: THE MISSIONARY.

References:

Mosiah, chapter 28, 29: 1-3; Alma, chapters 18-29.

Review Questions:

1. Who was Ammon? Relate the manner of his conversion. Why did the king's sons refuse the kingdom? Where did they go to preach first? Where next? What promise did the Lord make Mosiah?

2. Why was this a hazardous undertaking? Describe the Lamanites of this period, and their feelings toward the Nephites. What manner of government had they? Tell about the journey of these missionaries. What did they do upon reaching the borders of the land of the Lamanites? Where did Ammon go?

3. What was Ammon's reception? Tell what the king did with him. Relate his episode as a herdsman for the king. What did the king do when he heard of it? Tell the circumstances of the conversion. What happened when the king revived? What is said of Abish? What did she do? What did the people assembled think of all this?

4. What differences arose between Lamoni and his father? Why did Ammon go to Middoni? Why the king? What occurred on the way? What conditions did they find at Middoni? Relate the experiences given of Aaron and the rest.

5. How was the old king converted? Who were the Anti-Nephi-Lehis? What oath did the people of Lamoni take? What was the result? Why did these people go to the Nephites? How did the Nephites receive them? What about the people who lived at Ammonihah?

Questions to Think About:

1. Why are these conversions so strange and unusual? Before answering this question, consider the nature of the miracles, and the state of mind of the Lamanites.

2. Trace again carefully the connection between the peo-

ple who rejected Alma and Amulek at Ammonihah, and the Lamanites, who came against Lamoni and his converted subjects.

LESSON XVIII.

MORONI: THE SOLDIER.

References:

Alma, chapters 43-62.

Review Questions:

1. Who were the Zoramites? Where have we heard of the Zoramites before this? Relate the circumstance. Tell of their preparations for war.

2. How old was Moroni when we first hear of him? What office was he given at this time? What qualities must he have possessed in order to have won such confidence on the part of his people?

3. Tell of Moroni's preparations to meet the Zoramites. Why did they not attack Moroni at Jershon? How did Moroni find out where they were going when they left Jershon? Relate the circumstances connected with the battle. What terms did Moroni offer to Zarahemnah, and why did he offer them? What was Zarahemnah's answer? What followed then? What is said of this instance?

4. Who was Amalickiah? What led to his leaving the Nephites? How did Moroni succeed in turning back most of Amalickiah's men? What arrangements did Moroni enter into with the King of the Lamanites? Relate the circumstances connected with Amalickiah's becoming commander of the entire Lamanite forces. How did he become king of the Lamanites? Tell of his preparations to meet the Nephites.

LESSON XIX.

MORONI: THE SOLDIER. (Continued.)

Reference:

The same as in Lesson XVIII.

Review Questions:

1. State Moroni's preparations in collecting his army, and in fortifying the cities.

2. Why were the Lamanites so much surprised when they came to Ammonihah? What vow did they make on their way to Noah? How was this city fortified as compared with Ammonihah? What success did the Lamanites have in their attack upon the city of Noah? What was the result on the side of the Nephites, and on the side of the Lamanites? What oath did Amalickiah take when he learned the result of the attack on the city of Noah? Give an account of the internal disputes that occurred during this interval between battles.

3. Tell the story of how Moroni obtained possession of the city which had been taken by Jacob. Relate the circumstances connected with his re-capture of Gid.

4. Who were the people of Ammon? Tell how these people came to be there. Why did they not help the Nephites in their war? Who was Helaman? Why was he chosen captain of this little army? Give an account of how Helaman and his little band of warriors were able to decoy the Lamanites from Antiparah. Why was not a single one of these young men killed in battle?

5. How numerous were the Lamanites as compared with the Nephites in this war? How important was Moroni in this war as compared with Lehi and Teancum?

LESSON XX.

MORMON AND MORONI.

References:

Mormon, chapters 1-9.

Review Questions:

1. When did Moroni the soldier die? When was Mormon born? How many years between? In what two divisions are the facts grouped in the history of this period? How many years does the first group cover? Compare the Lamanites and the Nephites during this time. What is meant by the "Narrow Neck of Land?" What is said of the Gadianton robbers? What part did these robbers play in the final destruction of the Nephites? How many years is covered by the second group of facts? What was the universal characteristic of this period?

2. What does Mormon say of the condition of the people in his day? Compare this condition with the one that prevailed previous to this. What does Mormon say about the population at this time? Who was leader of the Nephite forces in most of the battles with the Lamanites at this period? Where did the last struggle take place? What was the outcome? What did Ammaron say to Mormon when the latter was ten years old? What did Mormon do in answer to this request? Express Mormon's feelings upon beholding the conditions of his people.

3. Who was Moroni? Is this the same Moroni that we spoke of in the last lesson? What does he say about himself after the death of his father? What did he do with the records that his father had given him? Give an account of his appearing to Joseph Smith in 1823.

GENERAL QUESTIONS.

1. The Book of Mormon is spoken of as a bad book by a good many opponents of Mormonism who have never read it. From what you now know of the characters described there, what do you think of this charge? Give reasons for your opinion.

2. Which of the Book of Mormon characters do you like best? Why? Would you like to read the whole book through?

3. How did we get the Book of Mormon? If someone should ask you to tell him briefly what it is about, what would you say?

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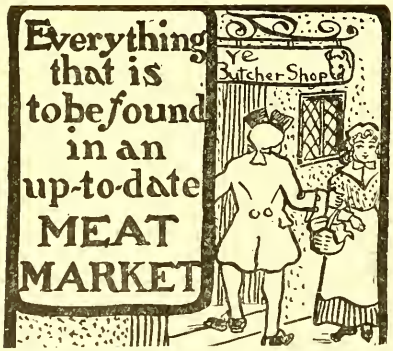

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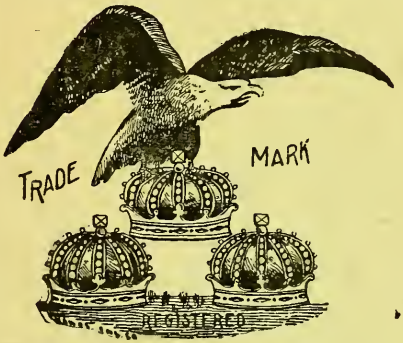

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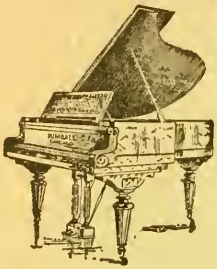

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